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The Shadowrun Campaign

Seattle, 2053–2063 · the Sixth World half of the crossover mega-campaign

> ⚠ **GAMEMASTER ONLY.** This outline contains the answers — every planted seed, every payoff, and every point where the Sixth World touches the Fourth. Do not hand it to a player, and do not read the crossover boxes aloud. A player who works a correspondence out unaided has had the best moment this campaign can produce. A player who is told has had a trivia fact.

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

A guide post. It walks the campaign from its first scene to its last in the order the adventures are meant to be played, saying what happens in each one, what the players come away holding, what was quietly planted for later, and which published book to open when you sit down to run it.

It is not a replacement for the modules. Every published adventure named here is a real book with maps, stat blocks and text worth reading aloud; this document tells you where each one sits in the arc and what it is doing for the campaign as a whole. Where an episode is engine-authored rather than published, it says so.

Nothing here is a mandate. A season is a menu — run six or eight of a season's episodes and let the rest stay in the world as things that happened to other people. The one thing that genuinely matters is the order of the planted seeds, and those are marked.

☆☆☆ WHO THIS IS FOR — INCLUDING AN AI GAMEMASTER

This document was written for a human gamemaster, and it is equally a tool for an AI one.

☆☆ If you are Claude, or any agent running this campaign from the knowledge base, treat this file as a first-class reference and consult it the way you would consult the rules index or the lore index. ⚠ It is not a summary of the knowledge base. It is the only place that says what each adventure is *for*, in what order, and which episode collects which seed.

⚠⚠⚠ What it gives an agent that the per-adventure files cannot:

Use it to	Because
☆☆☆ **Stay on track**	**The adventure files describe modules. This describes a campaign.** ⚠ It says what the season is about, what the current episode is doing for the arc, and what must not be spent yet
☆☆☆ **Look ahead safely**	⚠⚠ **Every entry names the episode where each seed pays off.** ☆ **Read forward before you improvise, so you do not burn a payoff you have not reached**
☆☆ **Keep the crossover discipline**	⚠⚠⚠ **The shaded boxes carry the one-way rule, the anti-conflation warnings and the spoiler gates. They are the difference between a correspondence and a spoiled campaign**
☆☆ **Answer "what happens next"**	⚠ Without re-deriving the sequence from the campaign files every session
☆ **Recover after a detour**	⚠⚠ **Players go sideways. This tells you what was owed, so you can collect it later from wherever**

	they ended up

⚠⚠ THE RULES THAT BIND AN AI GAMEMASTER USING THIS FILE ARE THE SAME ONES THAT BIND A HUMAN ONE, AND ONE MORE:

☆☆☆ NEVER PASTE FROM IT INTO PLAY, NEVER READ A SHADED BOX ALOUD, AND NEVER LET ITS CONTENTS LEAK INTO NARRATION. ⚠⚠⚠ This file contains every answer in the campaign. ☆ Consult it silently, then speak only as the gamemaster — the folder is the brain, and the table only ever hears the fiction.

⚠ And where this document and the knowledge base disagree, the knowledge base wins on facts — ☆☆ stat blocks, printed text, rules — while this document is the authority on *order, purpose and timing*. They are answering different questions.

HOW TO READ AN ENTRY

Each adventure gets the same six parts, in the same order.

Part	What it gives you
Source	The book to open, its publisher and product number, and whether the episode is published or written for this campaign.
What happens	The run in prose, start to finish, including the ending.
What the players come away with	Clues, contacts, debts, reputation, and anything they now hold that matters later.
Planted here	Seeds set in this episode, and the episode number where each one pays off.
Payoffs landing here	Anything paying off now, with a reminder of where it was set up.
Crossover	GM-only. Where this episode touches the Earthdawn campaign. Shaded, because it is never spoken aloud.

Two marks are used throughout. 📕 means a published module — the book is named. ✎ means engine-authored: written for this campaign, existing nowhere but here.

☆☆☆ WHERE THIS SITS — THE PLAY ORDER

Shadowrun is played first, and then the two campaigns alternate, one season at a time.

> Shadowrun season 1 → Earthdawn season 1 → Shadowrun season 2 → Earthdawn season 2 → and so on.

Both campaigns are eight seasons, so the pairing is exact. Alternate **only at a season boundary** — both games run on a clock and an advancement ladder, and a season break is the one place where both are at rest. Cutting into the middle of a season breaks the pacing of the game you leave and the advancement of the one you come back to.

Why Shadowrun goes first, and what it does to this document. The Sixth World seeds are unexplained tells — a courteous intermediary, the shape of a rite, a dead language known slightly too well. **The Fourth World is the answer key.** Playing Shadowrun first means every tell is planted blind, and the recognition happens later, in the second game, **in the player's head rather than the character's**. It never becomes a rules question and it never contaminates what either character knows.

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> ⚠⚠⚠ **The consequence for every crossover box in this document: they plant, they never call back.** A box here may refer to Earthdawn seasons the players have already finished — which, in season one, is none of them — and never to one they have not yet reached. The Earthdawn outline is the mirror of this: its boxes carry the back-references, naming the Shadowrun episode each correspondence pays off. **Nothing in this document should ever contain the words "as they saw in the Fourth World."**

> ☆ **The exception is the ending.** The finale is not a pair of season eights run back to back — it is a single joint scenario, and the two campaigns converge for it. Both season eights end in a room with the dragons in it, and they are the same room.

THE EIGHT SEASONS

	Season	Years	What it is about
1	Small Fish, Big Sprawl	2053	Learning the plex, and who lies to you
2	The Things Underneath	2053–54	Magic stops being a tool and starts happening to you
3	Everyone Knew and Nobody Said	2055	The bugs go public
4	The Long Con of History	2056	The immortal elves, and the first word about the Horrors
5	The Dragon Runs for President	2057	The election, and the assassination
6	The Will and the Ways	2058–59	The will, the corporate war, the arcology goes dark
7	Deus Ex Machina	2060–61	The AI that had been hiring them all along
8	Rite of Succession	2062–63	The dragons settle it, and the players cast the deciding voice

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SEASON ONE · Small Fish, Big Sprawl

Early to late 2053. Novice band, 0–25 Karma.

The pilot season, and deliberately the smallest. Nothing cosmic happens. The team learns the sprawl, learns that a Johnson's story is never the whole story, and learns that Lone Star remembers faces. They are not important yet and nobody treats them as though they are.

Underneath that, the season does exactly two pieces of long work. It hands the players a corporate research note buried in a newsnet broadcast that will not matter for seven in-game years, and it introduces them to a courteous woman with more money than her story explains, whose employer they will not learn for eight. Neither is flagged at the table. Both are collected in the last two seasons.

1.1 · Food Fight

SOURCE

📕 ***First Run*** (FASA #7328), adventure 1 of 3 — the new-player teaching collection. The scenario originally appeared in the first-edition boxed set and was updated for the reprint.

Novice band, roughly 2 Karma. Written for brand-new characters and a first-time gamemaster; the collection's own pregenerated runners work fine. Set in a nominal 2060 in the book, but the scenario is era-agnostic — **run it in 2053 exactly as written, changing nothing.**

WHAT HAPPENS

The campaign begins at four in the morning with nobody employed and nobody in danger.

The runners are awake, broke and hungry, and the only thing open is the **Stuffer Shack** on the corner — the twenty-four-hour convenience store that sells synth-alcohol, soykaf, cheap fetishes, porno simchips and better-than-life chips to anyone with a credstick and no questions. They shop. That is the whole first scene, and it should be played slowly and for texture, because it is the establishing shot of the entire series: this is the world these people live in, and it is fluorescent, sticky and unglamorous.

Then the **Chiller Thrillers** come through the door.

They are a low-tier thrill gang — their sign is a skull with a bloody icicle through the left eye — and they are here to rob the place and to enjoy it. They are not a threat to be respected and they are not negotiable. They do not back down, they do not run, and if the runners sit still and stay quiet, the gang will start killing shoppers for entertainment. The adventure is the firefight that follows, fought aisle by aisle in a supermarket full of ordinary people.

The store will not save anybody. There is a panic button under the counter that calls Lone Star, and **Wanda**, the clerk, forgets it exists. **Mr. Nick**, the dwarf manager, has a Defiance shotgun hidden behind the counter and will absolutely use it, and should not be relied on. Everyone else — **Mrs. Needles** and her child, the urchin **Louis Needles**, **Timmy Thinners**, the rocker-wannabes **Jack and Angie Scatman** — is a civilian with no answer to any of this.

The gang is built so that each member teaches a different lesson. **Catcher**, the leader, giggles and hangs back behind the counter, which teaches that the one you want is not the one in front of you. **SlicerDicer** is a katana-carrying bushi wannabe who will formally challenge a single runner to single combat, and means it. **Static** is an all-muscle burnout who attacks whoever damages an *object*

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— a genuinely strange trigger that will baffle the table in the best possible way, and reward the player who notices the pattern. **Zany** works the room in armored spike heels. **Spike** is a newbie who only wants loot and can be talked down or frightened off. And **Wiley** is a Coyote shaman with Sorcery 5, four Force-2 foci, and Confusion, Death Touch, Lightning Bolt and Mana Bolt — the only real danger in the building, and the reason a first-time table learns that the scruffy one at the back is the problem.

The signature mechanic is the **Food Fight Table**, and it should be rolled every single time. Each gunshot rolls 1D6 — plus one for a burst, plus two for full auto — and something on a shelf ruptures. The penalties escalate as the aisles fill with wreckage, difficult terrain and ruined visibility, and on a 6 the pyrotechnics go up and somebody takes a Body(4) Light Stun hit. A second roll of 2D6 generates the colour, consistency and type of whatever just went everywhere. It is funny, it gets funnier, and it teaches modifiers without a single word of rules explanation.

The book is explicit that this is **not meant to be do-or-die.** It ends when the gang is down or broken, Lone Star arrives, or the runners get out the door. Roughly two Karma: one for surviving, one for facing the gang down.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **How the game works.** That is the deliverable. Combat turn, dice pools, staging, one shaman doing something they cannot shoot at.
- **A first impression on file.** Whether Lone Star arrives to find them standing over bodies, giving statements, or already gone sets the tone of every police contact for a season.
- **The Chiller Thrillers**, as an ongoing piece of Seattle. Survivors and the gang's remainder are a reusable low-tier problem that can turn up any time a run needs a complication with a grudge attached.
- **Nothing else.** No patron, no thread, no mystery. This is intentional.

PLANTED HERE

Structurally, nothing — and that is a decision, not an omission. Food Fight is a tutorial, and the campaign's spine does not start until 1.3. Let the players' first hour be about groceries and gunfire.

> ✎ **One optional plant, engine-authored and free.** Louis Needles, the urchin, is written to pester everyone in the store about whether they are real shadowrunners and whether they have ever met a dragon. If you want the last image of the series to rhyme with the first, make him the one who asks — write his name in the save — and bring him back grown in Season 8, when the players are standing in a Council of Dragons deciding who wins the Rite of Succession. It costs nothing now and it is the cheapest bookend in the campaign. Entirely optional; skip it and nothing downstream breaks.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None. This is episode one.

> **CROSSOVER — none yet.** The first touch between the two worlds is two episodes away, in **1.3 Site of Desecration**, and it arrives disguised as a polite woman with a small job. Nothing in Food Fight reaches across; keep it clean.

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RUNNING NOTES

- **There is no plot to protect,** so let the players do anything. Hide behind the freezer, hold a hostage, throw a can of soypro at Static and watch him lose his mind about it. The scenario cannot be derailed because there is nothing to derail.
- **Do not let the gang play smart.** Their stupidity is the difficulty setting. A tactically competent Chiller Thrillers will kill a novice team.
- **The civilians are the scoreboard.** Nobody says so out loud. But how many shoppers walk out is the first moral fact the campaign records about these characters, and it belongs in the save.
- **If the table is experienced,** the collection's own *Pushing the Envelope* section scales the fight up. Do not skip the scenario for being beneath them — run it faster and harder.

1.2 · Supernova

SOURCE

📕 ***First Run*** (FASA #7328), adventure 2 of 3. Six linked scenarios paced by the book's own minute-by-minute timeline, from a seven o'clock meet to a four-thirty escape. Still novice band, but this is the first *full* run — meet, legwork, infiltration, betrayal, extraction — and it is where the team learns the shape of the job.

Karma: survive +2, threat level +1, **not** harming Villiers or Lanier +1, killing the cyberzombie +1.

⚠️ Written for 2061, and the only episode in Season One that does not drop into 2053 untouched. The re-skin is small and it is worth doing.

> ✎ **THE 2053 RE-SKIN.** As printed, the run turns on things that do not exist yet: Novatech, Dunkelzahn's will, and the "orphan corporations" the will exposed as secretly Fuchi-owned.
>
> In 2053, **Fuchi is intact and Richard Villiers owns a third of it.** So run the same night with the employer moved one corporation earlier: **Fuchi versus Renraku**, and **TekLon Electronics** is not an orphan but an independent microtronics startup both giants want — the firm whose parts end up in three of every four cyberlimbs, sitting on a nearly-finished prototype. Villiers and Lanier appear exactly as written; they are simply seven years younger and working out of a different building. Nigel is a Fuchi cleanup man secretly turned by Renraku rather than a Novatech one. **Every scene, map, stat block and beat after that runs untouched.**
>
> ⭐ This is the better option, and not only because it keeps the tutorial in Season One. Putting Villiers and Lanier physically in front of novice runners in 2053 means that when the **Villiers Maneuver** guts Fuchi in Seasons 6–7, the players watched it happen to a man whose penthouse they once stood in.
>
> ⚠️ The alternative, if you would rather not re-skin: hold Supernova and run it as written at its native date in **Season 7 (episode 7.2)**, where the corporate war is real. The cost is that Season One loses its decking and rigging tutorial and its only complete run.

WHAT HAPPENS

The meet, seven o'clock. Club Penumbra — a runner nightclub that has gone quiet, sitting too close to the Renraku arcology's militarized zone. The Johnson is **Nigel Terwilliger**: thirty-five, portly, graying, utterly average, and visibly out of his depth. He is a corporate infiltration man who got sloppy and has been handed his first turn as a Johnson. He offers twenty thousand nuyen each,

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no advance, and he wants a prototype lifted out of TekLon Electronics' Alpha Wing — the lab the staff call **the Pit**. The scene teaches getting hired, and it teaches weapon concealability, because Penumbra checks.

What Nigel does not say is that he is working both sides. He is Fuchi's man and Renraku turned him, and everything that goes wrong tonight goes wrong because of that.

The milk run. In through the Auburn sewers and access tunnels. A Force-6 ward on the wall, defeated with a solvent spray. Maglocks and cameras for whoever has a deck or an Electronics skill — this is the rigging and decking tutorial, and the module gives the host two settings depending on whether the alarm trips.

And then the scene does the cleverest thing in the whole collection: **there is no opposition at all.** Nigel's map is accurate and Renraku has quietly taken the security off-line, so the team walks through an empty facility for as long as they can stand it. A first-time table will burn an hour on paranoia in an empty building, which is exactly the intended lesson. They take the case. Inside is the **microtronic head** — an unfinished cybernetic head with eyes, lips and ears, cutting-edge and genuinely unpleasant to look at. On the way out, somewhere else in the building, they hear fighting they never find and never explain.

The wait. Downtime and healing, and the module's pacing beat. It is also where the hook is set: there is a second case in play, and it carries a rating-8 Renraku tracking signal that can be switched on from a distance whenever Renraku decides it wants to know where its property is.

Four Corners — the night turns. A warehouse crossroads in Bellevue for the exchange, and it arrives as **Elizabeth Chavez**'s car, on fire, careening into the intersection. Chavez is a TekLon researcher loyal to the employer, and in her panic **she grabbed the wrong case**: what she is carrying is Renraku's own research files, tracker and all. Renraku comes for it in force — two teams of **Red Samurai** rappelling out of stealth helicopters, two hermetic mages in a van, and the thing the mages brought with them.

⭐ The fight has a solution and it is not firepower. **The cyberzombie is stuck in a Confusion loop until one of the mages gives it a spoken order.** A team that works out that the van matters more than the monster survives the night; a team that tries to shoot the monster learns what negative mana does to a spellcaster. Chavez dies either way. Her **PDA** holds the only thing that matters: an address, 3844 Belmont Avenue, and a time, three in the morning.

Nobody will believe you. Fourteenth floor, a Force-14 ward, and behind it **Richard Villiers and Miles Lanier** in person. The runners give their account of the evening — and their account is what exposes Nigel as Renraku's man. **Lanier shoots him dead in front of them.** No discussion, no theatre. Villiers then buys the Renraku case off them, doubles the night's pay in thousand- and five-hundred-nuyen credsticks, and mentions that there could be work "running interference" later.

⚠️ This is the scene the adventure exists for. Villiers and Lanier have no stat blocks on purpose, they are not meant to die, and the lesson being taught is that the runners are pawns of people who settle things by deciding them.

The garage. Renraku switches the tracker back on and comes for the case one more time. Three maneuvers of rigger driving to get Villiers and Lanier out through the Red Samurai vans and the cyberzombie — or the team refuses, which is allowed and is remembered. Getting them out buys a very large favour from two of the most dangerous men on the continent.

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WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Forty thousand nuyen each**, if they made it to the penthouse — double the offer, which will spoil them for a season.
- **A corporate patron, and the debt that comes with it.** Villiers' "run interference" line is an open door, and the garage escape converts it into an actual favour owed. ⭐ Write down which, and by whom.
- **The lesson Nigel paid for.** A Johnson can be lying, be in over his head, and be dead before dawn, all in one night. Every meet for the rest of the campaign is read differently.
- **Two faces they will never forget** — and no idea how much those two faces are going to matter.
- **A memory they cannot classify.** Nobody in the shadows has a word yet for the thing in the intersection.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
Richard Villiers and Miles Lanier, met in person and owed a favour	**Seasons 6–7** — the corporate war, the Villiers Maneuver, and Fuchi's destruction happening to a man they have stood next to
The TekLon prototype — a microtronics prize other corps keep chasing	Any season; a standing hook the KB lists as reusable
Club Penumbra as the team's bar	Recurring Seattle furniture from here on
The cyberzombie	**Season 6 finale and Season 7** — Renraku, the arcology, and what the corp is actually building in there

✎ **ON THE CYBERZOMBIE IN 2053 — a genuinely good accident.** Cybermancy exists in this KB's own SR2 material, but it is hidden, experimental, and implied to be a **Fuchi** program. The shadow community does not get its first inside account of it — Hatchetman's confession, posted read-only — until a Shadowland timestamp of **March 2056.**

So the players meet one **three years before the shadows have a name for it.** Do not name it at the table, do not let anyone successfully make a Knowledge test about it, and do not explain it afterwards. Let it be a thing that was in an intersection in Bellevue. When the file surfaces in 2056 and describes being one from the inside, the table will go quiet — and when the arcology seals itself in 2059 with a hundred thousand people inside, they will already have a picture of what Renraku is willing to build.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None. The campaign is still planting.

CROSSOVER — none. Supernova is pure Sixth World: corporations, chrome and money. The first touch with the Fourth World is the next episode.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Do not let the empty facility be an anticlimax.** The silence in the Pit is content. Describe the cooling fans, the unattended terminals, the chair pushed back from a desk. Let them search it.
- **Villiers and Lanier must not be killable.** If the players open fire in the penthouse, the ward, the security and the plot all say no. The module is explicit and the point is structural.

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- **Kill Nigel in front of them.** It is tempting to soften it. Do not. His death is the thesis of the episode.
- **The cyberzombie is a set piece, not a boss.** It exists to be survived and remembered. The Red Samurai here are trainees; ⚠ they attack metahuman characters before human ones, which is worth knowing before an ork walks point.

1.3 · Site of Desecration

SOURCE

📕 ***First Run*** (FASA #7328), adventure 3 of 3 — and a deliberate change of gear. The first two are teaching scenarios; this one is a traditional adventure, where the gamemaster holds more of the plot and the villain's real nature is the thing being concealed. It is also the first run **outside the sprawl**, in the Cascade Ork and Salish-Shidhe lands east of Seattle.

Karma: survive +2, threat level +1 to +3, surviving the Old One's tests +1 to +3.

Drops into 2053 essentially untouched. ⚠ One line needs adjusting — see the crossover box.

WHAT HAPPENS

The shop. The Magic Touch, far-east Renton, right up against the Salish-Shidhe border. The Johnson is **Daisy Quallon** — a talismonger, a striking elf of mixed Native American and Caucasian descent with blond hair dyed six colours, who deals in the magical underground and has no interest whatsoever in being a shadowrunner. She is polite, she is straightforward, and she pays five thousand nuyen each for what is genuinely a simple job: drive out to **Hemlock Pass**, meet a smuggler crew she has used before, pay them, and bring back her telesma.

⭐ Play her as exactly what she appears to be. She is warm, she is a little too well funded for a Renton shopfront, and she does not explain herself. Nobody should think about her twice.

The drive. I-90 east, the Salish-Shidhe border crossing, and **Denny Creek** — a Native American tourist town — before the road runs out and they go off-road toward the pass. This stretch is the point of the episode as much as anything that happens later: Metroplex Guard, a border to talk their way across, weather, wilderness, critters. For characters who have never been anywhere the sky was bigger than the buildings, it should feel like the world got larger.

The wreckage. They find the meet already over. The **Pentagon** — Daisy's smugglers — have been ambushed and their GMC Banshee is down. There is a bad moment where frightened survivors shoot first. Once that is talked down, the story comes out: something took the cargo, and the something was a gang of trolls and orks calling themselves the **Tooth Warriors.**

What is actually going on, which the players learn in pieces and mostly at the end: a frustrated wannabe-smuggler troll named **Kaztok** found a crashed **Ares Dragon** rotorcraft in the woods, and near it he met **the Old One** — a *man-of-the-woods*, a rare and powerful **free nature spirit** bound to no conjurer, answering to nobody, appearing when it feels like it. The Old One let Kaztok believe he commanded it. The arrangement was the other way around from the first day. Together they raised the Tooth Warriors out of disgruntled Cascade Ork farmers and used the spirit's Fear, Confusion and Accident to take smuggler convoys apart — **Denver Bob**'s crew first, and then the Pentagon.

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The camp, by night. The site of desecration is a shrine the gang has built around the crashed rotorcraft, and the Old One moves through it shifting between a small tribal-clothed human, a patch of shadow, a walking tree and a talking animal. Assensing gets a flickering, shimmering humanoid and no useful answers.

⚠⚠ **The Old One cannot be beaten.** Force 7, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Astral Combat 10, Combat 11 — and if it is hurt it simply leaves for the metaplanes and comes back angry. Any team that treats this as a fight has misread the adventure.

The negotiation, which is the climax. The way through is to convince the Old One that Kaztok has been using it to hurt innocent people — Charisma and Willpower tests against a target of 7, with summoning a Force 7 or 8 spirit as leverage. What the players do not realise is that the spirit is not being persuaded so much as **testing them.** It has been listening to Kaztok for months and it wants to know whether anyone better has turned up.

The turn. Satisfied, the Old One drops the pretence, reveals what it actually is, and **kills Kaztok** — an "Accident," a ricochet, entirely casual. Then it says what it has wanted all along: it is bored of its woods, and it wants someone to take it out into the world to see it. It will attach itself to whoever present it judges worthiest.

If the runners have dealt honestly, it releases the Pentagon from the Fear and Confusion it laid on them, and everyone walks away with Daisy's telesma out of Kaztok's stash. The smugglers owe them. And the Old One may follow them home — an enormous, alien, wholly unpredictable boon.

And then the last scene, which nobody at the table will notice. Back at the shop, Daisy takes delivery, thanks them — and makes a call. Something answers, and an astral messenger goes out to the Old One in the woods. Daisy mentions, lightly, that she knows people who could use runners with a talent for handling spirits, if they ever want the work.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Five thousand each**, a clean job, and a talismonger who likes them.
- **The Pentagon**, as a standing contact — **Pounder**, the laid-back and dangerous New Orleans dwarf who founded them; **Breetva**, the Russian negotiator; **Heeley**, the Creole rigger mourning his Banshee; and the twins, the Snake shaman **Red-Scale-Snake** and the physical adept **Night-Strike-Woman**. A New Orleans-to-Seattle smuggling crew who now owe the team their lives.
- **Possibly the Old One itself** — a Force 7 free spirit riding along to see the world. ⚠ Handle with care; it is not a resource and it does not take orders.
- **A foothold in the Salish-Shidhe**, through **Crescent Eye**, the Cascade Ork farmer who stood against Kaztok's cruelty.
- ☆☆☆ **And one thing they have no idea they are carrying: Daisy's good opinion.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Daisy is a great dragon's agent**	**Season 8** — *Survival of the Fittest* and the Council of Dragons
Daisy's offer of "people who could use runners like you"	Any season — the on-ramp into a dragon's organisation, taken whenever the players get curious
The Pentagon	Reusable smuggler crew, all campaign; New Orleans matters again in **7.5**
The Old One	Recurring free-spirit ally, entirely at your discretion
Crescent Eye and the Cascade Orks	Standing hooks in the NAN lands

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> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE FIRST TOUCH, AND THE LONGEST PAYOFF IN THE CAMPAIGN.**
>
> **Daisy Quallon is an agent of the great dragon Hestaby**, and she will not say so under any circumstances. ⚠⚠⚠ **Plant it and say nothing.** Not a hint, not a knowing pause, not a Knowledge test that succeeds.
>
> Hestaby is **the same dragon in both worlds** — same name, same manner, unchanged across six thousand years — and she is one of the few for whom that is true without disguise. The correspondence is campaign canon, author-declared, and it is worth nothing whatsoever if it is explained.
>
> **What makes this the best-value seed in the campaign:** a novice team does one unglamorous errand for a polite stranger in their third session, and finds out in **Season 8** — nine seasons and ten in-game years later — whose errand it was, at the moment they are standing in a Council of Dragons deciding who wins the Rite of Succession. It costs one sentence now. Write **Daisy** in the save and do not touch it again.
>
> ⚠ **ONE 2053 ADJUSTMENT.** The module justifies Daisy's network being busy by noting Hestaby has been "extremely active since Dunkelzahn's death." In 2053 Dunkelzahn is alive, well and hosting a talk show. Change nothing about Daisy — simply play the network as quieter and more patient. She is not mobilising anything yet. She is buying telesma and noticing who is competent.
>
> ⚠ **Author note:** there is currently **no Fourth World Hestaby material anywhere in this project** outside the crossover register itself. The Season 1 to Season 8 payoff above is entirely Shadowrun-internal and works exactly as written. The *two-game* half of it — an Earthdawn party meeting the same dragon under the same name — has nothing planted on the Barsaive side to meet. See the note at the end of this document.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None. Season One is still all deposit and no withdrawal — by design.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Do not foreshadow Daisy.** The temptation to make her mysterious will be strong and it will destroy a ten-year payoff. She is a shopkeeper with good stock and a generous rate.
- **Let the drive breathe.** Sprawl characters standing in real forest is the whole reason this adventure is in the collection. Denny Creek, the border guards, the weather, the quiet.
- **The Old One is not a monster and not an NPC ally.** It is something with its own reasons that has been quietly running a gang for months and will kill its own instrument in front of the players without changing expression. Play it alien.
- ⚠ **Do not let the Pentagon get wiped.** Five distinct, well-drawn smugglers with a shared history is a better contact than anything the players will buy with Karma for two seasons. The shoot-first misunderstanding at the crash site is the moment they are most likely to die by accident — slow it down.

1.4 · Harlequin, chapter 1 — PHYSICAL

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305, SR2), the first of eight mini-adventures, each by a different author. ⚠️ **Requires *The Grimoire*** — the chapters use the advanced magic rules. Written for 2050; runs at 2053 with no adjustment.

Karma: the manuscript 3, the virus 2, and ⚠️⚠️ **acquiring the genealogy file 1 point, which the book instructs you to award without explaining why.**

> ◆ **ABOUT THIS THREAD — read once, applies to all eight chapters.**
>
> *Harlequin* is **not a campaign to run in a block.** The book is emphatic about it: the eight chapters are meant to be run separately, with other unrelated adventures in between, and it explicitly licenses dropping a chapter into another module's downtime. Queue them back to back and the entire effect dies. In this campaign they sit at **1.4, 1.8, 2.3, 2.8, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3 and 4.5** — spread across three in-game years.
>
> **What is really happening:** two immortal elves, **Harlequin** and **Ehran the Scribe**, are conducting an ancient feud through a ritual called **chal'han** — the Great Game. The challenger must make a symbolic display of power over **seven aspects** of his opponent's existence: his physical and spiritual being, his past, present and future, and those he loves and those he hates. Doing so proves he *could* have destroyed the man utterly, had he wished.
>
> ⚠️⚠️ There are **two versions**, and the defender is never told which is being played. *Chal'han che* leaves him alive with his reputation in ruins. *Chal'han se* usually ends with him dead.
>
> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **The strictures require both elves to act through intermediaries — "pawns" — and those pawns must remain ignorant of their involvement.** The player characters are Harlequin's pawns. They are not told any of this, and they will not be told until chapter eight.
>
> ⭐ **The mechanism that makes interleaving work is the item relay.** In each job the team acquires an object; in the *next* job they leave part of it behind, and never learn why. Each object symbolises one aspect of Ehran's life. The chain: **manuscript → (leave the title page) → six ear-tips → (leave the ear-tips) → medieval tome → (leave the frontispiece) → YET back-door codes → (leave the optical chip) → rare flower → (leave the flower) → Ehran's daughter.** The player-facing thread is a physical thing carried forward, which is exactly why months of unrelated play between chapters costs nothing.

WHAT HAPPENS

Midnight, the penthouse of Laubenstein Plaza — a fifteen-storey hotel at Sixth and Pike with a silhouette like a purple sea cucumber. The fixer's message says the team's last run was a thrill a minute and they are now far too hot: time to go low-profile, something to be pulled off with elegance and style rather than an assault cannon and a GMC Banshee. ⭐ It is a very good in-fiction reason to take a quiet job, and a clean re-entry point if you are slotting this chapter after a loud module.

The elevator, which is a test. Four large, belligerent orks are blocking Elevator Three and want to know why the team thinks it's needed here. ⚠️⚠️ **This is not an encounter, it is an audition** — the Johnson wants to see whether these people can get out of a tight corner without reaching for automatic weapons, and the orks have orders to let them through the moment anyone shows initiative or imagination. **Bribe** them (Etiquette (Street), target 5 — start at 5,000¥ and knock off 1,000 per extra success), **divert** them (Intelligence, target 5 — an alarm, a phone call, a decoy, and

they go thundering off), or **bluff** past (opposed Charisma against the leader). If it becomes a brawl the orks fight three rounds and run; if the runners lose, the Johnson is waiting when they wake up, and the book suggests taking the opportunity to lecture them about subtlety.

⚠⚠ **It sets the pay, and the players never find out.** Clean: 5,000 up front, 5,000 on delivery, 2,000 for leaving unrelated data untouched, plus 500 per net success on a negotiation. Messy: 3,000, 3,000, 1,000, 250 per success — and a warning that if any stray Sylvan data turns up on the open market, he will take action.

J.P. Morlock is a cross between a hunchbacked dwarf and something dour, with skin best described as death white, dressed in purple satin trimmed with white and black lace. The room reeks of jasmine and stale sweat. He pours wine, passes around real-looking paté and lights a twisted cheroot. ☆ **Play him as an offensively rich Mick Jagger.** Harlequin himself does not appear in this chapter and will not appear for a long time.

The job has two halves. Break into **Sylvan Information** and steal **Ehran the Scribe's handwritten manuscript** — archaic habits, about 240 pages, unmistakable. And plant a virus, which Morlock supplies, in the datastore holding the electronic copies. He recommends entering the system from inside the building, because the SAN is very secure. One week. No backup of any kind.

Sylvan Information sits in eastern Bellevue: a cruciform three-storey building in its own landscaped park, with walnut, oak, apple and cherry trees and an artificial lake with three small islands linked by bridges. Security is **light**, because a publishing house has no reason to expect a raid — two uniformed rent-a-cops with stun batons, panic buttons that put a carful of armed Lone Star on the lawn in three minutes, and **after seven in the evening, no guards at all.**

⚠⚠ What Sylvan has instead is **barghests.** Four in the kennel below and four patrolling the grounds at night, checked once per game turn. They attack to kill, and **their howling brings the others in at one per combat turn until all four are in the fight.** The park is ringed by a three-metre electrified fence — 5M if touched unshielded.

Upstairs, the six executive offices each hide a safe behind false panelling, and they are old-fashioned mechanical locks. The manuscript is in **Sylvia Green's** — Third Senior Editor, an elf. ☆☆ And in the CEO's safe, along with half a million nuyen, is a sheet listing the combinations to every other safe in the building. Green's is **5L, 8R, 18L.**

☆☆☆ **The Matrix run is the best set piece in early Shadowrun.** Sylvan has spent an obscene amount sculpting its system to look like a **primeval forest.** Every file is a leaf. Every SPU is a hexagonal stone tower guarded by knights in armour. Every I/O port is a cottage, every SAN a drawbridge over a data stream, and the CPU is a complete castle. From outside it looks like an ordinary angular UMS form; the imagery only starts once you cross the threshold.

The IC is sculpted to match. **Blaster IC is a pack of coyotes** that nip and nibble, and do the real damage — frying the deck — by *howling* once their victim is down. **Killer IC is wolverines. Trace IC is a fox** that never fights at all, just turns and darts off into the trees. And ⚠⚠ **Black IC is a single humanoid black dragon** on the castle ramparts, ebony scales shading to cloudy grey, which fights like a magician throwing fireballs and simply wants any intruder in the Sylvan Forest dead.

☆ **Only those four things are hostile,** which is the opportunity: make the decker nervous with everything else. A blue jay divebombs them. Gnats bite their face. A bear paces them on a parallel path through the trees. A sasquatch watches from a thicket and does nothing at all.

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The virus enters as a harmless little **bunny**, which burrows into the forest floor and disappears. A day or so later it surfaces as a high-resolution image of a **Renaissance rapier on every terminal in the system**, and it hunts down and erases every copy of Ehran's book. ⭐⭐ The rapier is Harlequin signing his name. Chal'han has begun, and nobody at the table knows it. ⚠️ There is a trap for greedy deckers: copy the program and in six days it begins eating 10 Mp an hour of whatever memory it is sitting in, and moving files out drags it along with them.

And then the thing this episode actually exists for. Among Sylvan's hundreds of files is **file 8-007** — some 240 Mp of genealogical and biomedical records covering dozens of families, the oldest entry dated **1834**. Every family's block ends with the words **"Surveillance Terminated"** and a date somewhere between fourteen months and forty years ago.

A **Perception (10)** test finds the pattern: **the surveillance always stops the moment a medical report shows serious illness — or when the subject reaches their late thirties or early forties.** A full search shows that **one block has been deleted**, and a **Computer (12)** test unpacks what is left of it. One success: deleted by an ordinary system command, and it belonged to a Midwest regional subset. Two: enough pointers survive to show its subject was **a woman in her late twenties**. Three: the remains of a tag linking the block to external monitoring programs — whatever went in here was **echoed somewhere else**. Four or more: the file was **deleted but never closed.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **That is Ehran the Scribe's hidden daughter, and the players have just found her six chapters early.** Which is why the book says to award the Karma point and say nothing about it.

If they fail entirely — a Lone Star holding cell or a hospital bed for a couple of weeks — Morlock simply hires another team who succeed, and the papers pass to the next Johnson. **The Great Game proceeds regardless.** Nothing downstream breaks.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Twelve thousand each** if they were clever at the elevator, seven if they were not, and they will never learn there was a difference.
- **A manuscript they handed over unread.** ⭐ If anyone does read *Mankind Revealed*: Ehran has terrible handwriting, it is in English, and it reads like neo-philosophical trash predicting a future where all mankind lives happily and in harmony. It will sell millions.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **File 8-007**, if the decker was curious — and this is the one thing in the chapter worth steering toward. See the running notes.
- **One Karma point with no explanation attached to it.**
- **J.P. Morlock**, as a fixer who now knows they can be discreet.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **File 8-007 and its one deleted block**	**4.3 — Harlequin 7, FUTURE.** The target of that run **is** the deleted record: Jane Foster, Ehran's daughter. Three in-game years later.
The manuscript — the PHYSICAL aspect of chal'han	Chapter 2 (**1.8**), where they leave the title page behind and never ask why
The rapier icon	Harlequin's signature; it recurs, and it is the one visual that ties eight unrelated jobs together
The surveillance pattern — a bloodline watched for two centuries, dropped the moment it sickens or ages	The immortal-elf arc entire, **Season 4**
J.P. Morlock	A reusable fixer; the front men change every chapter, which is itself a clue

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> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — WHO HARLEQUIN IS.**
>
> **Harlequin's Fourth World name is CAIMBEUL** — *"Caimbeul har lea Quinn"* — seven thousand years old, and **the last Knight of the Crying Spire**, an order of Horror-fighters whose home in the Northern Islands was blasted to dust. ☆☆ That order was already in this project's Earthdawn history before the correspondence was drawn; it was **found, not invented.**
>
> That single fact explains the entire man: the theatricality, the messiah complex, the refusal to explain himself to anyone, and the fact that he has been fighting the same war alone since before the kaers were sealed. He is the good-side pole of the whole two-game metaplot, and the ancient adversary of the villain of *Harlequin's Back*.
>
> **Ehran is his opposite number and the argument predates the Sixth World entirely.** ☆ Play the Game as **two very old people who have had this fight before.** Neither will ever say how old it is.
>
> ⚠⚠ **HOW TO PLANT IT — never let Harlequin allude to a first age.** No sighing about lost centuries. Instead: he knows a dead language a little too well, he recognises something nobody alive should recognise, he grieves an order nobody has heard of. ☆☆☆ **The genealogy file is the model for the whole technique — the players carry something enormous out of the building and have no idea what it weighs.**
>
> ☆ Off to one side and deliberately off the spine: the Tír Tairngire threads eventually reach **Alachia**, High Queen of the elves since before the Scourge — a wildcard patron who plays for rule as an end in itself, and Caimbeul's opposite in a different direction from Ehran.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None. The first four episodes of this campaign are pure deposit.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Never run two Harlequin chapters back to back.** The book says so and it is right. The next one is at 1.8, with four unrelated episodes in between.
- ⚠⚠ **Steer someone into the datastores.** The manuscript is in a safe upstairs, so a purely physical team can finish the job without ever touching file 8-007 — and then chapter seven has nothing to land on. Give the decker a reason to browse: Morlock's own instruction to leave unrelated data intact invites a look at what is there, and the safe combinations are in the system, which is a perfectly good excuse to go reading.
- **Run the elevator straight.** Do not tip that it is a test. The pay difference is the scoring and it is invisible.
- **Spend real time in the forest.** It is the most memorable twenty minutes in Season One and it costs nothing but description.
- **The barghests are the actual danger.** Light security plus eight dogs that summon each other is how a novice team dies here. ⚠ The book's own guidance: if the plan is brilliant, let it work; if it is clumsy, dump a carload of Lone Star on them.

1.5 · Ivy and Chrome

SOURCE

📕 ***Ivy and Chrome*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition, so no conversion at all. Uses *The Grimoire* for the magic and *Sprawl Sites* for archetype stats. Written for 2050; the aftermath handout is dated June 2051, which re-dates to 2053 by changing two numerals.

Karma: Fayette saved and d'Venescu eliminated **5**, Anton merely neutralised **3**, simply surviving **1**.

⚠⚠ **The darkest module in Season One, and you should know its content before you schedule it.** The plot turns on a father who has sworn to cut his infant daughter's heart out, and who murdered her mother doing the first half of it fifteen years ago. It is not gratuitous — the horror is handled at a distance, in medical records and ritual notes rather than on camera — but it is a child-murder story, and it is worth a word to the table beforehand.

WHAT HAPPENS

The meet is in the Matrix, which is unusual and is doing work. The team is hired through **Virtual Meetings Incorporated**, a high-end virtual conferencing service famous for privacy and photo-real quality — a plush virtual teak conference room. ⚠ Magic-active characters are acutely uncomfortable senselinked in: a Matrix target penalty equal to their Magic attribute, and no spellcasting inside the sim at all.

The Johnson arrives as **"Diana"** — a female icon in gold Greek armour who speaks haltingly, falteringly, and does not seem entirely human. ⭐⭐ The players will decide she is an AI, and the module wants them to. She is not. She is **Marti Vann**, a bad decker clumsily piloting her dead sister's legendary cyberdeck, which still carries the custom chips of the decker who owned it and therefore still wears that decker's face. The halting speech is a middle-aged woman out of her depth.

The job is simple and the fee is enormous: **10,000 each now, 20,000 on safe return.** Find **Fayette Myers**, sixteen, missing since this morning from the Rhododendron Conservatory in Bellevue. ⚠⚠ She does not mention Aztechnology, or Anton, or the ritual, and she will not, ever.

The school is 130,000 nuyen a year, with DecoVeggie shrubbery and troll-shouldered guards in leisure suits, and the staff would very much like this handled quietly — the security chief is actively covering it up and paying gangers to lean on anyone asking questions. What is in the building, for a team that digs:

- ⚠⚠ Fayette's tuition is **laundered out of an Aztechnology account.**
- Her grades collapsed months ago, she disappeared once before — brought back for a "re-examination" at a place called the **Juzu Clinic** — and there is **code-residue in the school's system left by Aztechnology deckers who were here first.**
- The dispensary's records show her Juzu appointment coded **"Cqm-S."** It is not a physical. It is a **DNA comparison against Anton d'Venescu**, run to confirm that she is his daughter.
- Her gym locker holds an airline ticket to **King's Glen, North Cove**, and an elf-ear stud.
- Her suite-mates have theories, all wrong, and one of them — **Che-Che** — has been feeding Fayette's secrets to a Dr. Arhill. On a napkin: *"We'll use the Rapier."* ⭐ That is not an aircraft. It is her boyfriend's Yamaha Rapier. **She never got on the plane; they rode.**
- And the mathematics teacher is a **Humanis Policlub Chivalric Knight** who has been watching Fayette in order to save her from her elven boyfriend.

The trail turns bad at Elby's. The bar downtown where Fayette met Nick — *"Humans welcome, too!"* — is eerily, wrongly empty. ⚠⚠ Ork mercenaries hired by Arhill raided it looking for her and

killed twenty-eight witnesses, whose bodies are stacked in the back room. A mage named Farnwell is astrally scouting the place as the runners arrive.

This is the hinge of the adventure. Up to here it has been a runaway-schoolgirl job. From here it is obvious that something is prepared to erase a barful of people to get to a sixteen-year-old, and the team has no idea yet why.

The middle of the run is legwork with teeth: an ork mercenary bar with a job-board pin stuck near North Cove; the **Double Devils**, an all-elven go-gang who cut Nick loose for taking up with a human, and whose junkyard holds his abandoned van with a water-stained **map of North Cove, Shoalwater circled in red**; an ork at Sea-Tac holding Fayette's photograph and watching the commuter flights.

And the Juzu Clinic, which is a dungeon. Dr. Arhill's office holds matched father-and-daughter X-rays and charcoal rubbings of Aztec glyphs — an occult test reads them as **plans for a chamber to ward off the vengeance of the Aztec gods' insect-avengers.** An exam room holds a two-snake Aztec calendar and a three-metre **blood idol** tagged *Property of Anton d'Venescu, ATC*; assensing it reports ritual sorcery performed on it within the last fifteen to twenty years, and a failed Willpower test means retching. The loading dock reeks of industrial insecticide, in quantity, because Anton is genuinely afraid of insects.

⚠⚠ **The basement is Anton's lair**: mirrored ebony walls behind a **Rating-7 ward that is fading.** Aztechnology's mages renew it, and Anton believes that when they can no longer manage it, the things he owes will come through and kill him. He estimates a few months. He cowers down there with a shotgun and a library of ritual disks.

⚠⚠⚠ **If the runners are captured** — and Arhill tries hard to capture them — he tranquillises them, casts **Mind Probe** to strip everything they know about Fayette, has a **tracking disk and microphone implanted under each captive's shoulder blade**, and then *deliberately lets them go*. They walk out believing they escaped, and they lead him straight to her. It is the cruellest beat in Season One and it is entirely fair.

The drive out crosses into Salish-Shidhe land, which needs a Council Lodge travel permit and involves random stops by tribal patrols. ⚠⚠ Killing tribal warriors here turns nearly the entire Salish nation against the team permanently — a consequence that will outlive the adventure by seasons. A truck-stop conversation earns the shape of what is coming: two groups went toward Shoalwater, a pinkskin girl went onto the tribal registry, and then suits and razorguys started throwing money around to get past the patrols.

Shoalwater is an elven tribal holding on a rocky coastal outcrop — sixty-five people, **thirty of them children**, running on solar and wind, technology in the service of nature, and perfectly willing to take in a human girl. Marti Vann speaks for them.

⚠⚠ **And they decide by consensus.** To mount any defence at all, the runners have to win over **thirty-five voting adults**, arguing down committed pacifists one at a time. ⭐ This is the real climax of the module and it is a *social* encounter: the players must persuade a community of pacifists with thirty children to prepare for a firefight. Whether they manage it decides how many people die.

If they do, **Jac** — a former thunderbird driver — admits to the wreck he hid in the trees: a downed GMC Banshee he calls **Charlotte**, with twin laser-guided anti-vehicle missile launchers and three reloads, salvageable in about six hours of work. Beyond that the commune owns five hunting bows and its garden tools.

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The raid comes at half past two in the morning, about the fifth day. Arhill, Anton and their people row ashore **magically invisible**, spell-locked and undetectable, using Sleep spells to take Fayette quietly. Then military helicopters come in over the water and put ork mercenaries on the ground, ten to a chopper, with orders to level the place around the girl. ⭐ The jury-rigged missile launchers are the answer to the helicopters; Charlotte's radio is the other one, because the **Salish-Shidhe Ranger Force** will send combat mages once convinced a corporation is invading tribal land.

And underneath all of it, the thing the players assemble in fragments: in 2034, Anton d'Venescu was a serious conjuration researcher at Aztechnology working on peyote-derived compounds. Under the drug he made contact with something he named **Patecatl**, and as his initiation into its mysteries he bound himself to sacrifice **a mother and her daughter.** He completed the first half. His wife — **Suzanne Vann-d'Venescu**, the legendary decker "Diana" — died with her heart taken, but not before she had smuggled the baby to her step-sister and quietly embezzled an Aztechnology trust fund into the child's name.

The offering was never finished, and the debt has come due. His own corporation's doctors have a clinical name for it: **Cacodemon Debt Default Syndrome** — madness, apparitions of the aggrieved spirit, and death. He is not hunting his daughter out of devotion. He is hunting her because he thinks it is the only thing that will keep him alive.

⭐⭐ **And the module leaves it genuinely ambiguous, which is a gift.** Aztechnology's own psychologists believe his lost magic is a self-induced block and doubt he ever contacted anything at all. **Your call, and you never have to make it.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Thirty thousand each**, if they brought her back.
- ⭐ **Fayette herself, as a recurring ally** — she flunks out of the Conservatory, she is free to go with Nick, and she is sitting on a one-and-a-half-million-nuyen trust fund with money, tribal and underworld ties. She is sixteen and she now knows what her father is. ⚠ She is far more useful as a person the team keeps checking on than as a payday.
- **Shoalwater**, and how they left it. Sixty-five people either owe them everything or buried children because of them.
- **A first, unglamorous look at Aztechnology** — not as an enemy, but as an institution that laundered a schoolgirl's tuition, funded a clinic, supplied a wage-mage with ritual materials, and did nothing while he prepared to murder her.
- ⚠ **Marti never tells them she was Diana.** She tells Fayette, later. The players may go the entire campaign believing they were hired by an AI.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Aztechnology, and the shape of what it does**	**2.1 Mercurial → 3.2 DNA/DOA → 4.6 Harlequin's Back.** ⚠ Play all four as one institution, not four unrelated corp jobs
⭐⭐ **The aftermath newsnet: three "berserk" fire elementals injure dozens at the Renraku arcology, no origin given, no statement**	**Season 6 finale and Season 7** — the earliest arcology anomaly on the board, printed on a player handout years before it matters
⭐⭐ **The same newsnet: Fuchi's hostile takeover of a research firm, stock up 35 percent on a magic-and-technology meld rumour**	**Seasons 6–7**, the corporate war — and it lands harder now that 1.2 made Fuchi the employer
Fayette's trust fund and contacts	Any season; a patron the players built themselves
The Salish-Shidhe and the Ranger Force	Recurring; **3.1 Peacekeeper** returns to NAN politics

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CROSSOVER — THE CONNECTIVE VILLAIN'S FIRST APPEARANCE, AND HE IS NOT IN THE MODULE.

In this campaign, **Aztechnology is the Sixth World host of the Scions of Thera**, and the hand inside it belongs to **Nehrion Dask** — an immortal Theran blood-magus of the Great Project who fled the eruption of Thera westward, seeded the Aztec blood-empire, and has been running the same procedure ever since. His Sixth World shadow-name is **Darke**, whom the players will meet in *Harlequin's Back*; the Aztlan cults render it **"Oscuro."** He serves the Hunter, and he hunts what the dragons hide.

This is why the module opens on child sacrifice — and in this campaign that is not corporate horror-flavour. It is liturgy. Anton d'Venescu is not an aberration his employer tolerates; he is a badly-executed instance of a rite his employer has been performing for six thousand years, which is precisely why Aztechnology funded his clinic and wanted to see whether it would work.

HOW TO PLANT IT: do not name anyone, and do not imply an immortal. Plant **the procedure.** The specific shape of the rite. The Nahuatl cadence. The way the blood behaves. The idol's proportions. The fact that the heart is taken *and kept*. **The payoff is cross-game and it is the best one in the project:** an Earthdawn party who later stands in a Theran chamber and watches a blood-magus work will recognise **the same rite** — and nobody will have told them anything.

Practical note: this is most teams' first Aztechnology contact, and the season map wants it played **as rumour, not war.** The corp never appears. It is an account number on a tuition invoice, a grant to a clinic, and a name on the base of an idol.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None. Season One's fifth episode is still all deposit — but this is the last one of which that is entirely true.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Hand out the newsnet whichever way it ends.** Both versions carry the arcology and Fuchi items, and they are the two longest fuses in the campaign. The failure version is also the single most chilling handout in the KB: Aztechnology announcing a metamagic breakthrough, with Anton quoted saying *"I owe it all to my daughter Fayette. With her contribution, I cut right to the heart of the matter."*
- **Let them think Diana is an AI.** It costs nothing, it is a lovely misdirection, and the truth is sadder.
- **The consensus vote at Shoalwater is the climax, not the helicopters.** Give it real time. Name the pacifists, let them speak, let the players lose an argument or two. A table that talks thirty-five frightened people into defending their own homes has earned the firefight.
- **Do not let Anton be a villain the players enjoy.** He is a frightened, drug-damaged man who murdered his wife and intends to murder his child so that he does not have to die. Play him small.
- **Watch the Salish border.** A trigger-happy team can acquire a nation-sized enemy on the drive out, three episodes into the campaign, and it will stick.

1.6 · Elven Fire

SOURCE

📕 ***Elven Fire*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition, nothing to convert. Bundles in what it needs from *Sprawl Sites*.

⭐⭐ **This module is natively dated to the campaign's exact present.** Its closing newspaper handout reads **Tuesday, May 20, 2053.** Nothing needs re-dating, re-skinning or moving; for once the calendar simply agrees.

Karma is awarded as a team pool: dealing with the yakuza **+4**, defeating Dumont **+4**, defeating Bright **+5**, down-scaling the gang war **+5**, divided evenly, plus **+2** each for surviving.

⭐⭐⭐ **The most solo-friendly module in the knowledge base** — it is investigation-led, it hands the player allies rather than expecting a full team, and it never requires more than one fight at a time.

WHAT HAPPENS

It opens with something that has nothing to do with the plot. A freak shaft of Seattle sunlight, and then two Americars full of punks — not gangers, the module is careful about that word, just *meat* — roar down the block spraying fire at nothing in particular. They pause for one combat turn and run. Pedestrians are hit. Some of them die on the pavement, and because they are SINless, no DocWagon is coming.

⭐ It is pure establishing shot: this is how far the city has slid in the weeks before the adventure starts. The book's own note on it is worth reading, because it tells you the register to run this whole module in: *"If the runners get geeked by a pack of punks like these, they don't deserve to play this adventure — go directly to Character Generation. Do not pass Go. Do not collect 200¥."*

The hire comes from a cop. Koren Thark is a troll veteran of Lone Star's gang division, and he reaches the team through a Lutheran minister who runs a youth shelter in Redmond and a street kid named Wiser. He is spending Lone Star's discretionary funds **off the books**, because his superiors have told him to drop it and he is genuinely frightened: the gang war is escalating toward the point where the governor mobilises the **Metroplex Guard** out of Fort Lewis, and Thark has done the arithmetic on what a quasi-military force does to a city full of gangs.

Twenty thousand up front, twenty thousand for solid evidence of a conspiracy, and he wants a report every six hours. He hands over a datachip: graffiti footage of the calling card — green-and-black-clad elves and the words **ELVEN FIRE** scrawled in flame — and the security video of his snitch St. John being murdered in a dive bar, where a **one-armed smartgunner drops St. John and a table of yakuza with computer-enhanced accuracy and simply walks out.**

⚠⚠ **And here is the thing the players cannot know: Thark's own analysis is poisoned.** He relies on a respected independent authority on elven affairs, consulted by Lone Star and the City alike — and that man is the villain. Everything Thark believes about the Ancients came from Shim Bright.

The trail runs through four doors, and they can be opened in any order.

Lucinda. St. John's girlfriend saw the murder and is hiding behind a Loveland club whose owner will produce her if the team seems trustworthy. She is really **Lucinda Mari Adler**, the runaway daughter of a Bellevue plastics magnate with a bounty out on her. She insists the killer was *"human, cold, like the dead"* — ⭐ but a Perception (6) reveals something she does not know about herself:

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she is magically active and completely untrained, and what she did in that bar under peak stress was reflexively assense. The killer had obvious elven features. She was describing his aura.

⚠ The club is bugged by the yakuza, and the **Tigers** will hit the warehouse to take her. Every six hours the yaks roll to find her hiding place again.

The Ancients. A bike escort down to the Tacoma docks, and a meeting with the gang's leader **Sting**, her second **Green Lucifer**, and **Falchion**. They flatly deny being Elven Fire, and they are telling the truth. ☆☆ The break comes when the team produces evidence that one Elven Fire shooter was **human** — Green Lucifer recognises him from an earlier attack, goes quiet, and the Ancients stop being suspects and become allies. Twenty Meat Junkies with light machine guns and heavy shields hit the meeting before anyone leaves.

The yakuza. The Whispering Nights clan, and the best etiquette set-piece in the season. The lattice walls of the house are a **weapon and cyberware scanner**; the runners are expected to leave their guns and take off their shoes, and to sit through tea before business. ⚠⚠ The oyabun's blind daughter **Midori Ino** is an initiate who "sees" by clairvoyance and assenses every guest as they pass — *and pausing to assense her back is a serious insult.* Handled with respect, the clan grants a **forty-eight-hour stay on retribution** and gives up the one fact that cracks the case: St. John's old partner was a merc named **Mike Dumont**.

The plastics magnate, for comic relief and money — fifty thousand for his daughter delivered to his door, twenty-five for her location. ☆ He can recite *Paradise Lost* in twelve languages, which is the module's second Milton joke and worth catching, because the first one is the villain's name.

Then Bright panics, and the panic is the mistake. He feeds Thark a false lead about an ex-Ancient who is already dead, and the team walks into an ambush in a Redmond tenement with the residents held hostage. ⚠ Interrogating the survivors produces the key: the man paying for all of this is known to them only as **"Rook."** His plan is to destroy Sting and Green Lucifer and replace the Ancients with a gang loyal to someone else. **Elven Fire is not a splinter faction. It is a fiction Rook invented.** They do not know Rook works for the Tír. Dumont does.

Maze Mind is the best-designed location in Season One: a closed Renton bottling plant, flooded, dripping, no floor plan, built as a physical model of **Michael Dumont's broken mind.** On the walls, in his handwriting: *"Have I been born yet?... Rook is my angel... My soul defiled... Cancer of the mind... Rook says kill."* In chalk: a bride, smeared away. A man with water pouring from his eyes and mouth. And ⚠⚠ **an angel wreathed in flame, holding an infant's head underwater.**

The fight is cat-and-mouse, and it is built so that **the harder they hunt him the better he gets.** ☆☆ But he does not have to be killed. After three failed Willpower tests he stops functioning altogether and no longer knows who or where he is; a few more, and he can be calmed. The module's own line for it — *"in the body of a killer is the mind of a small, lost boy"* — is the whole scene. The character who first identified him is the one who can talk him down.

⚠⚠⚠ **And tracking Dumont turns up the thing this episode is really for.** There is a Tír facility that holds captured agents of foreign powers. Dumont was seen there, transferred to a military installation near the CalFree border, and never came back the same. A contact with Tír or intelligence connections can put a name to it: **"The House"** — a military-intelligence think tank that also performs re-education *"on a limited basis."* And, quietly: *"most of the poor SOBs who go through it end up losing the magic they use."*

☆ If a player character knew Dumont, they remember a resourceful, stable merc who took a job into Tír territory four years ago and never came back.

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The end is at a helifield in Bellevue. Shim Bright is leaving, with forged Salish-Shidhe diplomatic immunity papers, waiting on a tilt-rotor that carries **Tír Tairngire registration.** Officials can stall it about twenty minutes. He will talk his way out if allowed to.

⭐⭐⭐ **And if Green Lucifer came along, the module detonates.** Bright takes one look at him and screams *"KYLISEARN! You're dead! You're SUPPOSED to be dead!"* — then attacks in a frenzy he cannot win, ranting about a High Prince. Green Lucifer shoots him mid-sentence to stop the speech.

What Green Lucifer will admit afterwards, if asked: he is an exiled Tír lord. He was condemned publicly and banished secretly. And **someone in one of the Tír's golden halls decided the Ancients had outlived their usefulness**, and sent Bright and a fictional gang to destroy them.

⚠⚠ **What he works out only at the very end — and the players may never be told at all — is that his own exile was arranged by the High Prince personally.** The Prince knew Kylisearn's former allies would one day move against the Ancients, so he planted a ruthless, vengeful, betrayed man inside the gang and let him make himself indispensable, secure in the knowledge that he would fight to the death against the very people now coming for it. The book's own summary is the best line in the module: *"These events did not come to pass according to anyone's plan, but this is what happens in games of men and nations."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Forty thousand from Thark**, plus up to fifty more from Lucinda's father — the biggest payday of the season.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **The board, changed.** They came in on a gang war and they leave knowing that **Tír Tairngire runs assets inside Seattle**, that a foreign nation's internal politics were being fought out through their city's gangs, and that nobody in authority is going to say so publicly.
- **The Ancients as allies**, and **Green Lucifer** as one of the best recurring NPCs available this early — a courteous, ruthless exiled aristocrat running a street gang under a Milton pun.
- **Koren Thark**, a Lone Star detective who now owes them and who went off-book to hire them. ⭐ An honest cop contact is rarer and more useful than a fixer.
- **The Whispering Nights**, and a demonstrated ability to sit through tea without insulting anyone.
- ⚠⚠ **And a place on a list.** Success puts them on *"a long list of meddlers to be dealt with in Tír Tairngire."* Nobody tells them this.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Tír Tairngire runs assets in Seattle**	**Season 4** — the immortal-elf arc, where the Tír stops being a foreign country and becomes the plot
⭐⭐ **The team is on a Tír list**	Any season; ⭐ it is the cleanest reason for a hostile elven operation to find them later
⭐⭐ **"The House" and Tír re-education** — *most of them lose the magic they use*	The Tír threads; ⚠ and it is the mechanism that broke Dumont, so it already has a face attached
Yakuza etiquette and clan structure	**2.7 Dark Angel**, which is entirely about the fact that you cannot kill an oyabun without clan sanction
The Metroplex Guard, mobilised but held	Standing threat; ⚠ if the team fails here it becomes the setting
Green Lucifer · Koren Thark · Father Roe	Recurring NPCs, all three worth keeping

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> ⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — THE SECOND TUG, AND IT IS THE SAME THREAD AS 1.4.**
>
> The board changes when the team learns Tír Tairngire runs assets inside Seattle. In this campaign that reach ultimately traces back to an elven court that has been running assets **since before the kaers closed** — and at its far end, to **Alachia**, who was named off-stage in the Harlequin box two episodes ago.
>
> ⚠ **Nothing in this module should say so.** Bright dies believing he served a faction. Green Lucifer names a High Prince and stops there. What the players get is a shape: *an elven government that plants people decades in advance, condemns them publicly, exiles them secretly, and is still collecting on it years later.*
>
> ⭐⭐ That shape is the point. When the Season 4 material reveals a plan measured in centuries rather than years, the players should feel that they have seen the technique before at a smaller scale — because they have, here, in a gang war in Everett.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None yet — but this is the first episode that **collects** anything, in the sense that the team's reputation from earlier runs determines who will talk to them. If they burned the Salish in 1.5 or shot up the Stuffer Shack in 1.1, let it show in who takes their calls.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐ **The 48-hour clock is the engine — run it visibly.** The yakuza's stay on retribution, the Guard's mobilisation and Thark's six-hour check-ins all tick on the same timer. Say the time aloud when scenes end.
- ⚠⚠ **Thark's intel is wrong and it is not your fault or theirs.** When the Redmond lead turns out to be a trap, make sure the table understands *the cop was lied to*, not that the GM cheated. Bright's whole method is being the trusted expert.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Signal that Dumont can be talked down.** He is a victim of the same institution the adventure is about, and killing him costs the team the best scene in the module. A hesitation, a fragment of a sentence, the chalk drawings — give them a reason to try.
- **Do not skip the tea.** The yakuza den rewards patience and punishes swagger, and it is the season's only encounter that a fast, violent team can simply fail at while standing still.
- ⚠ **Bring Thark to the finale if you can.** If the runners go without him, he turns up beaten near-dead at Bright's house — which works, but is a worse ending than the honest cop being there to see it.
- ⭐ **For a solo player:** this is the module to run. The Ancients supply the muscle, the investigation carries the middle, and both climaxes are one-on-one.

1.7 · Dreamchipper

SOURCE

📕 ***Dreamchipper*** (FASA #7201) — an early Shadowrun module, SR1/SR2 compatible, needing nothing but the core rules and its own tables. Four pregenerated runners included.

Written for mid-August **2050**; its closing newsnet is dated Wednesday, August 17. Re-dating to 2053 is a two-digit change and nothing else moves.

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⚠⚠ **A hard four-and-a-half-day clock.** Urlan says it out loud: *"It's now Sunday night. That gives you four and a half days."* Everything must be in Roxanne's hands by nine on Friday morning, because that is when Global's board meets.

⚠ **This is the one Season One module that genuinely wants a decker.** A phone trace and a box of junk are the two doors into the middle of the adventure, and a team with no one who can work either will stall.

☆☆ **Karma, and read this before you run it:** surviving **+2** · each chip returned in working condition **+1** · each chipped character allowed to escape **−1** · ☆☆ **each chip destroyed +2** · the technical documentation destroyed **+1** · Urlan keeps his company **+1**.

WHAT HAPPENS

Global Technologies, a small Bellevue skillsoft house, built three prototype chips that fuse skillsoft with dreamchip technology. Slotted into any datajack, they give the user the skills, the knowledge and ⚠⚠ **the personality** of an encoded person. Global was aiming at the military market, and to demonstrate the range of the thing they encoded three historical personalities: **Genghis Khan, Cleopatra, and Jack the Ripper.**

☆☆ **The reason any of this is happening is a will.** Global's founder left his stock to his partner **Urlan Manes** rather than to his son — and he re-dated that will just after the son, **Thomas "Junior" Martelli**, goblinised into an ork. Junior has spent years being the disinherited child of a man who changed his mind about him when he changed shape. He went to a rival simsense house, and together they arranged to steal the prototypes and collapse the over-extended Global at Friday's board meeting, so the rival could buy the wreck cheap.

⚠⚠⚠ **And then the plan destroyed the people running it, because the fixer paid his crew in chips.**

- **Griffin**, a street samurai, took **Jack the Ripper**, and is killing and dissecting prostitutes in the Seattle fog.
- **Val**, a rigger, took **Cleopatra**, and has enthralled the rival executive who commissioned the whole theft.
- And **Cooperman** — a fixer who fancied himself a historian — took **Genghis Khan**, and is now uniting the Redmond Barrens go-gangs into a horde.

The hire happens twice. First at **Reno's**, the downtown bar where runners go to be found, where a sharp corporate woman calling herself Johnson says she cannot afford a high-priced crew and is *willing to work with younger talent*. ☆ Two things are catchable as she leaves: a corporate etiquette test reads the logo on her lapel, and an Intelligence test spots **a small man in dingy synth-leathers following her and reporting into a wrist phone.**

Running that man down through the Barrens produces a phone number for a hundred nuyen, and the number is **Junior's private line.** ⚠ A decker can trace it to a name. A decker who fails the trace brings eight telecom security men down on the team in five minutes, which the module frames as a useful lesson about whose property the phone network is.

Then the real meet, at The Banshee — a small, quiet business bar in the Barrens with a broken neon sign, a steel door, a dwarf who checks heavy hardware into racks, and white-noise generators bolted to every table. ☆ An Intelligence test in the back room notices that Roxanne has changed clothes and looks windblown, with her hair disarranged and a bruise on her neck. She has been somewhere by helicopter, fast.

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Urlan Manes is a huge full-blooded Ute in a bone vest, fringed breeches and beaded moccasins — a snake worked into one sole, a green bird into the other. He offers **thirty thousand per runner per chip recovered intact**, and ⚠ **one thousand per chip destroyed.** Remember that ratio; the entire adventure comes back to it.

⚠⚠ He gives two warnings and refuses a third piece of information. **Do not use the chips** — they are insufficiently tested prototypes and their use could cause severe permanent neural damage. **Do not damage them** — they are unique, and the thieves wiped every backup. And he will not say what is on them, calling them complicated skillsofts. ☆ **The players are meant to find out during the run, from someone else.**

☆☆ **And, exactly like the Harlequin elevator, the fee is being scored silently.** Rudeness to Roxanne costs a thousand. Asking directions to the Banshee costs a thousand. Failing to get anything out of the tail costs two. A firefight in the bar costs five. Getting the phone number is worth fifteen hundred. Nobody tells them, then or ever.

Junior interrupts the meeting in person — six foot six, a toothpick, a swirl of cape, two ork bodyguards with pistols resting on cape-draped arms — makes a mocking remark about an impromptu company meeting, looks hard at every face in the room, and leaves. ⚠ He came to memorise the team so he can follow them.

The middle of the adventure is a box of junk, and it is one of the best legwork scenes in early Shadowrun. Global's inside man was **Tee Hee**, a brilliant young decker who is, in Roxanne's words, *somewhat lost when not jacked in* — naive, and constantly forgetting things. His desk was emptied into a three-foot plastic cube, and buried in the red herrings are four objects that all point the same way: a microtool kit inscribed *"Future Good Luck, Flair"*; a lighter with the name of a decker tavern worked into its circuit pattern; a holocube in which one of eight photographs shows a white-haired man at a desk, captioned **Dr. Hendrix**, holding a coffee mug that says *Flair*; and a packet of herbal tea from a specific grocery.

☆ Tee Hee's evicted old professor is hiding him, and the tea and the tavern say where.

Tee Hee's confession is the reveal, and it comes in stages. He is jacked in on the professor's floor and does not notice anyone entering. Pull the plug and he wakes frightened and ready to bargain — and the team must choose to either negotiate with him or lean on him, not both. What comes out, success by success: he let a fixer named Cooperman into the think tank, and a street mage named Freya took two rounds from a guard and was left behind on Cooperman's order. He was recruited by Junior with the promise of a credstick and a top-end cyberdeck. And then, ☆☆☆ the thing nobody has said out loud yet:

> *"They're personality chips of some sort. You plug them in, and you're the man or woman of the chip. The things are unstable as hell though.* ***If you leave them in too long, you can lose yourself forever.****"*

Push further and he admits he destroyed the R&D files and hid the only surviving backup **inside Junior's own desktop computer**, to be restored after the merger.

⚠⚠ **There is a sting attached to him.** Urlan pays a five-thousand bonus for Tee Hee returned safely — but if the team does not wait for the pickup team to arrive, the professor's apartment burns, and the single body recovered is Tee Hee's. The professor is never seen again.

Freya is the ally, and she is worth the detour. She is recovering at a back-alley clinic whose head doctor charges a hundred nuyen per ten minutes, flat and non-negotiable, and sells answers à

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la carte at five hundred to twelve hundred each. ⭐⭐ Freya has been astrally eavesdropping on that entire negotiation from the next room, already knows everything the team told him, and intends to deduct half his fee from her own bill.

She hands over the shape of the enemy for nothing: Cooperman is not in it for money but for power, considers himself an authority on history, and *"seems to have a serious lock-on for Genghis Khan."* Griffin is the kind of razor who would sooner cut you than look at you, and the two dead guards at Global were his.

Then three hunts, in whatever order the team likes.

Cleopatra is at a Queen Anne's Hill party, on the arm of the executive who paid for the theft, being introduced as his new girlfriend.

Jack has been narrowed to about fifteen blocks. ⚠ The obvious play — and the module knows it is the obvious play — is to give him a target, since most of the neighbourhood's working women have sensibly taken the week off. A runner in costume makes excellent bait. Salt the night with false alarms so nobody relaxes.

And the Khan is in a warehouse called the Lion's Den, with the vacant lots around it full of four gangs readying their bikes for a thunder ride into the Barrens. Slipping through takes four stealth rolls, or gang colours and a good story. ⭐ Inside, the chip has degraded far enough that Cooperman has begun to lose his grip: he is standing on a box, addressing eight gang leaders.

> *"I am Khan. You are leaders of rabble. Each of you will pledge himself to me, and I will mold your men into the most feared fighters in the world... I will lead you down into the Barrens, where we will make the streets run red with the blood of our enemies."*

⭐ He stays on the box shouting orders, which makes him an extremely easy target. ⭐⭐ And the module hands the players a beautiful lever: once the leaders start breaking, **a fleeing gang boss screaming that it was a set-up will get everyone outside shooting at the other gangs instead.**

⚠⚠⚠ **One grim detail that should not be softened: removing the Khan chip discharges its capacitors into Cooperman's brain and kills him.** Recovering that chip is an execution, and the players will not know until they have done it.

The ending returns to The Banshee, and the module writes the moment better than any summary can: a new bouncer checks their weapons, the razor in the doorway steps aside a little too quickly, and — *"So this is what respect feels like."*

⭐⭐⭐ **And then the fork, which is the whole point of the episode.**

- **Hand the chips back** — or hand over the technical documentation — and **Urlan keeps his company, and the Global Dreamchips go into production**, for the military market they were built for.
- **Destroy the chips** and they never exist again — ⚠ but Urlan may lose Global, and the team throws away twenty-nine thousand nuyen per chip per runner.
- ⭐⭐ **Or the third path:** destroy the chips *and* the documentation, and use the notes hidden in Junior's own datastore to discredit him at the board meeting. Less money, no dreamchips, **and Urlan keeps his company anyway.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The module's Karma table is the only argument it makes, and it makes it quietly: destroying a chip is worth twice the Karma of returning one intact.** Thirty times the

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money to hand it over, double the Karma to burn it. **Do not show the players that table and do not editorialise. Let them decide, and write down what they chose.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Money or a clear conscience, but not both**, and however much they took.
- **A working relationship with Global** — a glowing recommendation and occasional work — if they kept Urlan in his chair by any route.
- ⭐ **Freya Goldenhair**, an elven mage betrayed and abandoned by her own team, who becomes a contact for the *whole* group if they were decent at the clinic and brought her along at the end. **The best contact available in Season One.**
- **Tee Hee and his old professor**, if they were patient enough to wait for the pickup; and the rigger **Val**, if she was handled with any kindness at all.
- ⭐⭐ **The beginning of a reputation at The Banshee** — not with the owner, who has no idea who they are, but with the bouncers and the staff, which is how reputations actually start.
- ⚠⚠ **And an enemy they made by winning.** The rival executive *"does not take defeat lightly, and the team has put a serious roadblock in his career path. He has the juice to make the team members miserable if their paths should ever cross again, and he would love to do it."*

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐ **Booker Pengrave's grudge**	Any season — ⭐ a corporate enemy the players manufactured themselves, which is worth more than one you assign them
The Dreamchips and the military market they were built for	The BTL and simsense thread; **2.1 Mercurial** carries the same technology as background
⭐ **Freya · Tee Hee · Flair · Val**	Contacts; Freya in particular is a mage ally three seasons before the team can afford one
The Banshee	Recurring Barrens fixture; the respect beat only lands because they were nobodies here in episode seven
Junior, disinherited for goblinising	⚠ Thematic rather than mechanical — but it is the season's clearest statement of what metahumanity costs socially

✎ **A RHYME WORTH SETTING UP — Sixth World only, no Fourth World content.** This is the second time in two episodes that the campaign has shown the players **a person overwritten while still awake inside it.** In 1.6 it was the Tír's re-education facility and what it did to Michael Dumont. Here it is a chip that submerges a personality so completely that *under no circumstances will the user ever allow it to be removed.*

⭐⭐ Say nothing, but keep the pair in mind — because in **Season 7** the campaign's antagonist is an intelligence that does this to an entire arcology. A table that has already met two small versions will recognise the third without being told.

CROSSOVER — none. *Dreamchipper* is pure Sixth World: corporate succession, chips and money. Do not attach anything to it. Season One's crossover load is already carried by 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6, and a season needs episodes that are only themselves.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None structurally — though if 1.1 through 1.6 have gone badly for the team's reputation, Urlan's silent fee adjustments are a fine place to let that show.

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RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐ **Run the clock out loud.** Sunday night to nine on Friday, and all three targets are degrading the whole time. Name the day at the top of every scene.
- ⚠⚠ **Do not explain the chips yourself.** Urlan refuses to say, and the reveal belongs to Tee Hee, frightened, on a professor's floor. If the party never gets it out of him, let them go the whole adventure not knowing — it is a better story and the module supports it.
- **Wait for the pickup team, or Tee Hee dies.** It is easy to miss and it is a real consequence. Give them the chance to make the call knowingly.
- ⚠ **The Khan chip kills Cooperman when it comes out.** Do not warn them. Do let them see it happen.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **On the fork: be genuinely neutral.** No NPC lobbies them. Urlan does not plead, and the module does not moralise. The players get to find out what they are by choosing with real money on the table, and whatever they choose goes in the save as a fact about who this team is.

1.8 · Harlequin, chapter 2 — HATES

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305), mini-adventure 2 of 8. ⚠ Requires *The Grimoire*. See the thread box at **1.4** for how chal'han and the item relay work — this is the second beat, and four unrelated episodes have passed since the first.

⭐⭐ **Karma, and read it before you run it:** the envelope delivered **1** · every three ear tips **1** · ⭐⭐ **protecting the little girl 1** · ⭐⭐ **allowing Fierelle to atone 1** · ⚠⚠ **killing the little girl by accident −2.**

A wetwork job whose Karma table pays as much for saving a child and redeeming a fanatic as for the entire body-count objective. That is not an accident and it is the reason this chapter is worth running carefully.

WHAT HAPPENS

The target is a hate group that thinks it is a charity. The **Association Para-Nobilis** was founded in 2040 to protect elves, and its own pamphlet is not lying: *"During the riots of 2039, a total 4,739 Elves were killed."* Then its founder died in a suspicious monorail accident in 2043, his secretary became convinced it was murder, and that secretary trained the group's twenty-seven members as soldiers and launched a private war. **Six of them survived it.** He called a halt, rebuilt, renamed himself **Xeric**, and today the APN has about three hundred members who attend meetings and hand out literature — and a **Council of Elders** made up of those six war survivors, who now murder anyone, elf or otherwise, who disagrees with their idea of how elves ought to live.

⭐⭐⭐ **And here is the detail that makes the whole thing work: almost every member of the APN is a poser.** Humans with cosmetic surgery and false ear tips, playing at being what they idolise. They keep a horse in the basement that a veterinary surgeon has altered to look like a unicorn. The medieval elven weapons on their meeting-room walls, hung between floor-to-ceiling murals of Tolkien, are **all fakes.** Their armoury has missile launchers, grenade bandoliers and racks of submachine guns, and ⚠⚠ **no ammunition for any of it.**

The meet is at a good downtown restaurant, in a private dining room behind a false coat-closet door. Three people: **Charlie Tarrow**, an ageing woman whose looks are going and whose

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cybernetics cannot replace them; **Wyrd**, who dresses like a razor and is in fact an experienced hermetic mage; and **Trey**, sixteen years old, hair slicked back like a refugee from an old vampire movie, with a hold-out in a quick-release holster.

The job is twenty thousand to shut the APN down, plus two bonuses. **Twenty-five hundred to leave a sealed envelope on the lap of the APN's leader.** And **three thousand each for the false left ear tip of all six Council members** — forty thousand for the night, if they collect the set. The pitch ends: *"Well, posers?"* ⭐ It is a private joke between Charlie and Wyrd. They mean the runners, who are posing at being shadowrunners.

⚠⚠ **What matters more than the job is how Charlie got it.** She and Wyrd were running the shadows before the word existed; she helped invent the fixer trade in the early 2030s and retired years ago. She is back *"only because the offer came through channels she thought extinct for decades."* She does not like that far too many people know she is involved, and she cannot say who is behind it.

Legwork has three doors, and one of them is the best NPC in Season One.

⭐⭐ The original building plans are fourteen flights underground in a municipal archive that used to be a nuclear shelter, and they are guarded by **Harriet Taylor** — eighty-eight years old, forty-seven years in the job, a little deaf, under a metre and a half, thirty-six kilos, in a flowered sun dress and reading glasses, with a step ladder for the top shelves. **How much she gives up scales exactly with how kindly she is treated.** Rush her and she finds the plans in three hours while the big strong runners move her paper stacks. Be pleasant and she mentions that somebody else asked for these same plans a fortnight ago — an elf who looked like a samurai. Be genuinely nice and she produces **an update showing an elevator to the basement was installed**, offers Aunt Sara's baked brownies, and suggests introducing the team to her daughter.

The second door is infiltration — the APN keeps a reception area and holds Thursday meetings on subjects like *The Humanis Threat*. ⭐ With a wrinkle: **because the membership are all posers, a genuine elf has trouble passing as one.** A "worthy" elf with a sword and a bow makes them all want to be him; a wired street samurai upsets them badly. **A human in false ears has a much easier time.**

The third door is her daughter. **Kerry Taylor** is a freelance reporter who quit her job five months ago, after a four-person video crew assigned to watch the APN was found buried in a metre of ceracrete — discovered only because one wristphone was still transmitting. Her partner led that crew. She will hand over everything she knows about the Council, photographs included, and she does not care whether she gets a story. ⚠⚠ She is also quietly magically active and does not mention it, considering it an ace in the hole.

⚠⚠ **And the APN has scheduled her murder for the night the runners arrive.** About an hour in, spies decide the team is part of the conspiracy and attack with four more bodies than there are runners — while **Erendahl watches from the street and does not engage.** He is measuring them. Afterwards he tells the Council these people are formidable and advises hiring professionals of their own.

The raid. The APN headquarters is an old two-storey building standing literally in the shadow of the **Renraku arcology**. ⭐⭐ And the building's single best tactical fact is an architectural accident: the arcology bounces sunlight around to light the parts of downtown its bulk would otherwise darken, and by evening its display lighting keeps the street bright. **The deepest shadow of the**

entire day falls just after dawn. A team that works that out has chosen the right hour without being told.

⚠ Four posers are awake and armed at any hour, because they are expecting an attack from a rival group. An alarm or heavy weapons fire brings Lone Star in 2D6 minutes, and Lone Star will investigate *everyone* on the premises.

☆☆ **The most exploitable detail in the building is the silent alarm.** Somebody sits in the dark by the admissions office trying not to panic and press it. And because there have been so many false alarms, **Xeric always telephones that desk to check before raising the general alert.** Only silence, or confirmation, escalates it. A team that answers that phone convincingly owns the building.

Inside: Xeric keeps the APN's entire records on **stacks of paper, with not a terminal in sight.** A locked plan room holds contingency plans to exterminate almost every high-tech elven organisation in the area — ⚠⚠ and rigged to burn the papers if the door opens with the alarm live. A storeroom holds three anti-vehicle missiles that can be repaired for five thousand nuyen and ⚠ would explode in the firer's hands. And in Xeric's indoctrination room, in a glass case, ☆☆ **a bronzed quill pen with a plate identifying it as having belonged to the elven sage Ehran.**

Two people in the building are not targets.

☆ **Maria** is seven, and if no alarm has been raised she is asleep on a couch in the lounge. She sneaks in at night with the unofficial blessing of one of the Councillors. To a runner who is kind to her she will talk about the questions the *Red Woman* has been asking her — *"mainly concerning the ethics of killing someone to preserve his purity"*, though of course she will not put it that way — and she can say which room the Red Woman sleeps in.

☆☆☆ **And Fierelle the Red is the module's conscience.** Room 11 is a blood-red version of an Arabian Nights tale — red veils, red bedding, red walls, red carpet — and the woman in it is awake and watching the door. She joined this to help people and lost her mind in the purge that followed the founder's death; she wears red as a reminder of the elves she failed to save. For weeks she has been quietly wondering whether killing metahumans to preserve their purity is murder, and a seven-year-old thinking so has not helped.

⚠⚠ **When the alarm goes up, she does not come out.** She stays in her room wondering whether she still has the right to kill anyone. **Her instinct is to talk.** A team that speaks to her calmly can get her cooperation, or at least her neutrality — and **if they simply ask, she will hand over the cosmetic ear tips she is wearing.** If Maria is with them and runs across the room shouting *"Don't hurt the Red Woman,"* so much the better.

⚠ And if she is left alive inside the APN, she will almost certainly be killed for the good of the cause as soon as Xeric works out she has stopped agreeing with him.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Up to about forty thousand**, if they collected the whole set.
- **Six false ear tips in a bag**, which they will carry into the next chapter and leave somewhere, for reasons nobody will explain.
- ☆ **Harriet and Kerry Taylor** — an archivist who can find any building plan in Seattle and a reporter who embarrasses corporations for a living. ⚠ Both are worth more than the fee.
- ☆☆ **Possibly Fierelle**, alive, out, and owing them her conscience.
- ⚠⚠ **And survivors who saw their faces.**

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PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠ **The APN survivors**	**2.8 — Harlequin 4, LOVES.** They recognise the team, and two policlubs that hate each other declare a truce to hunt them. ☆ Six episodes later, and the players will connect it themselves
The sealed envelope — the title page of the manuscript from 1.4	The relay. Chapter 3 collects the next object; the ear tips get left behind there
☆☆ **The bronzed Ehran quill in a glass case**	The immortal-elf arc — ☆ the first physical object tying a Seattle hate group to the man whose book they stole in 1.4
Erendahl's report to the Council	Immediate: the APN starts hiring professionals, which is why 2.8 hurts
Fierelle, if she lives	An ex-Councillor of a terrorist organisation who owes them; ⚠ she is also a marked woman

☆☆ **CROSSOVER — nothing new, but two things to notice.** The identities were laid out at **1.4**; do not restate them and do not let Harlequin appear.

☆ **First: Charlie's line about the channels.** She came out of a twenty-year retirement because the offer arrived through a network she believed had been dead for decades. That is what it looks like when someone who has been alive for seven thousand years calls in a favour — the infrastructure is simply older than the people using it. ⚠ Play her unease. She knows something is wrong with this job and has no vocabulary for what.

☆☆ **Second: the quill.** The players are now carrying the *title page of Ehran's manuscript* into a building that keeps *Ehran's pen* in a glass case, and they will notice neither. **This is the technique working exactly as intended** — enormous things passing through their hands unlabelled. The Season 4 payoff is built entirely out of moments like this one.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

The first real one in the campaign, and it is small on purpose. The envelope the team is paid to deliver contains a page torn out of the manuscript they stole four episodes ago. ⚠ Nobody will connect the two. That is fine — it is the mechanism, not the reveal, and it is being demonstrated now so that the last one lands.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆ **Let them find the dawn.** The shadow analysis is written into the building and a team that reasons it out should be rewarded with a genuinely quieter raid.
- ☆☆☆ **Do not steer them toward Maria or Fierelle, and do not hint at the Karma.** The whole point is that a wetwork contract contains two chances to be decent, both easy to miss, neither worth any money. If they take them, say nothing and write the points down.
- ⚠ **The armoury is empty and the missiles explode.** Let a looting team find out the hard way; it is the sharpest joke in the module and it says everything about the APN.
- **Answer the phone.** If the players think of it, give it to them — it is exactly the kind of cleverness the chapter rewards.
- ⚠⚠ **This is an assassination contract on a room full of deluded people, several of whom are victims.** The module knows that: one Councillor is a scientist whose mind was destroyed by chips, another is a killer who does not care who he kills, and one is trying to stop.

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> **Let the table feel the difference between them** — and if they refuse the job outright, remember the Great Game proceeds regardless and someone else takes the contract.

1.9 · One Stage Before — SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***One Stage Before*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition, dual-statted, using threat and professional ratings. *Sprawl Sites*, *The Grimoire* and the *Street Samurai Catalog* are useful but not required.

⭐⭐ **Set exactly at the campaign baseline.** The text opens *"The year is 2053"* and the closing newsnet is dated **Friday, August 25, 2053** — which is where Season One ends and Season Two begins.

Karma: dumping Himem **+1** · Highstar evidence **+1** · the booby-trapped simsense **+1** · the den proof **+3** · defeating Teague personally **+2** *or* driving his own corporation to eliminate him **+1**, not both · and ⭐⭐⭐ **orchestrating the Jetblack reunion +3** — the same award as the evidence that clears them of murder.

WHAT HAPPENS

It opens as the softest job in the season. The megaband **The Shadows** have a single sold-out Kingdome show in twelve days, tickets went in an hour and scalpers want up to a thousand nuyen. In the middle of that, two impeccably suited corporate expediters walk into the team's regular bar, drop a five-thousand credstick as good faith, decline to say who they work for or where they are going, and put the runners into a Rolls-Royce Phaeton.

The man in the park is **Jonathon Teague**. **Allenby**, the dwarf president of the firm that manages The Shadows, has been getting death threats and had his car bombed three days ago, and stubbornly insists on handling it himself, which Teague's employer finds unacceptable. Investigate quietly, find who is behind it, hand them over. **Eighty thousand: ten now, seventy on completion** — and he will happily haggle the completion figure up by half, ⚠️ because he has no intention of ever paying it.

Allenby throws them out. His office is in a decaying grey building with no security at all and platinum discs on the walls — mostly The Shadows, and a few belonging to a dead angst-rock innovator called **Jetblack**. Allenby is jacked into his desk by fibre-optic, calls the car bomb a smoke charge, says that when you are as successful as he is you always have enemies, and at the first mention of Teague's corporation goes off like a grenade — *"Those vultures?! Get out!"* — and has his troll bodyguard remove them.

Outside, a stranger is waiting. Big, heavily chromed, jungle-cat quiet, in a black duster. He calls himself Wallace, just Wallace, says he is looking for work, and asks a lot of questions about Allenby's business position. If pressed he shrugs and walks away. ⭐ It is a deliberately strange scene whose only job is to make the players uneasy.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Three hours later, Allenby is dead and Lone Star has an all-points bulletin out on the team for his murder.** A patrol car opens fire on them in the rain. A second car arrives fifteen turns in, a third at thirty, and a SWAT Citymaster five minutes after that. **They cannot shoot their way out of the entire metroplex police force, and the module is explicit that they must run** — alleys, sewers, anything.

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⭐⭐⭐ **This is the moment Season One turns.** In episode one these people were hungry at four in the morning in a Stuffer Shack. Nine episodes later the whole city is hunting them for a murder they did not commit.

The frame is elegant and it is the reason the adventure exists. Teague's corporation wants to buy Caravan; Allenby holds the majority stock and will not sell. So the plan was never to protect him. The plan was always to murder him and hang it on a team of shadowrunners — ⚠⚠ **because who on earth would believe that shadowrunners had been hired to work *for* a corporate executive?**

Two people reach out to the fugitives. Allenby's secretary confirms that he was alive when they left the building, and that his simsense demo directory has been wiped. And **Meta**, an expediter at Teague's own corporation who disapproves of what he is doing, makes contact — she is genuine, an Analyze Truth will confirm it, and Teague never told her he had hired anybody.

The trail runs through the music scene. At a luxury penthouse party, The Shadows hold court, and ⭐⭐ they raise a toast: *"To absent friends, and to those who are no further away than sunset"* — then smash their glasses. A Perception test reads it as a band tradition. **It is not a tradition. It is a coded reference, and remembering it is worth three Karma later.** Then Teague walks in, recognises the team, and bolts for his car.

Afterwards, a young ganger on a bike is following them, and ⚠⚠ he has **two puncture wounds over his carotid artery** — the badge of honour every member of his gang wears.

⭐⭐⭐ **He takes them to a blacked-out fire station, where his leader steps out of the dark wreathed in a cool blue nimbus.** It is **Jetblack**: the angst-rock megastar who has been dead for several years, and who is now a **vampire**. He faked his death rather than destroy his old life and mislead his fans, and his gang know exactly what he is and revere him for it. He wants Allenby's killer as much as they do — *"if the fragger's still alive, I get first shot."*

⚠ He runs Analyze Truth on everything they say. And he gives them the one thing that cracks the case: Allenby was a compulsive diarist who recorded everything, including his threats, on a concealed node — and the codeword is **UNRULY**.

The murder method is the best thing in the module. Caravan's system is off the Matrix because they stopped paying the bills, so getting to it means physically breaking into a taped-off crime scene. Inside, the concealed datastore opens and the whole thing comes apart:

Teague hired **Himem**, a twenty-three-year-old prodigy, who built **booby-trapped simsense** — a recording rigged with black IC that fires the moment the sim plays, driving lethal feedback straight through the viewer's datajack and into their brain. He hardwired a hidden tap into Caravan's system, planted the rigged recording among the demo files Allenby reviewed by datajack every day, and Allenby played it and died at his desk. Then Himem wiped the directory. ⚠⚠ He did not know the system automatically backed everything up.

⚠⚠⚠ **And the weapon is still loaded.** Sampling Allenby's simsense records means fighting Killer and black IC through the decker's own datajack, using exactly the method that killed the victim.

Wallace comes back and levels. He is an FBI contractor on a task force investigating collusion in an entertainment industry where a handful of megacorporations control ninety-eight per cent of the news media. He has worked out who killed Allenby and why, homicide is outside his jurisdiction, and

he cannot act officially — so he wants the runners to do it. Then he hands them the second codeword: *"I think you found the door that wasn't there. The word of the day is **Charon**."*

That opens the hidden line into the corporate network, which holds Teague's takeover manoeuvres, his home address, and ⭐ Himem's private research on modified black IC — **worth up to two hundred thousand nuyen to the right buyer.** ⚠ Himem defends it in person as a Three Musketeers fop with a laser épée, and his arrogance keeps him fighting well past the point where he should have jacked out.

⭐⭐⭐ **The best scene in Season One is not a fight.** To storm Teague's compound the team needs bodies, and the vampire has twenty — but he will not commit them while he believes his old band would reject what he has become. His fear of exposure is close to paranoia.

The toast at the party is the answer, and a team that noticed it can bring him to the band's condominium, where the singer takes one look and says *"It IS you… I KNEW you weren't dead."* ⚠⚠ **They knew from the beginning. They have always known, and they respected his choice to disappear.** Freed of it, he commits himself and his gang on the spot — with the caveat that *"we're gangers, not assault troops. YOU do the planning."*

The assault is on three hectares of Vashon Island waterfront behind a six-metre electrified monowire fence, with twenty-five corporate security guards, troll handlers with dogs, an earth elemental warding the house, shoreline sensors, lasers and pressure pads, and helicopter backup ten minutes out. ⭐ With the gang along it is roughly fifty guns and an elemental against seventy — and **the module's own advice is to play that battle off-stage and resolve only the shots fired at or by the runners.** The players move through a war they did not have to win.

In the den, behind a hidden panel, is a notebook holding Teague's takeover files **and Himem's notes on installing the booby-trapped simsense.** That is the proof. Teague fights to the death over it.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Their names back** — ⚠ and nothing else from the law. Lone Star recalls the warrants grudgingly, offers no apology and no restitution, and the team earns no goodwill whatsoever from the Star.
- **No fee from Teague, ever.** ⚠ And trying to squeeze his corporation fails: there is no formal link, so they brand him a loose cannon, hide behind deniability, and put hit teams on the runners for asking.
- ⭐⭐ **A hundred thousand nuyen and two Kingdome tickets from The Shadows**, who gain free-agent status out of all this — ⚠ if the team reunited them with Jetblack, and did not sell his bootlegged recordings, which betrays the band and earns a vampire gang boss as an enemy.
- ⭐ **Wallace**, who keeps them on file. **A federal Johnson is a rare and excellent thing to own.**
- ⚠ **Himem, alive.** He was only dumped from the system. He is twenty-three, brilliant, humiliated, and now has a grudge.
- ⚠⚠ **And Teague, if he lived, counts his lifespan in days.** Within forty-eight hours his own corporation silences him, and the newsnet reports a suicide.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **"FIREWORKS OVER FUCHI"** — Fuchi	⭐⭐⭐ **SEASON 7.** This is the seed of the entire *Deus*

announces a milestone in its secret **symbolic processor project**, the cornerstone of its artificial-intelligence research, thought to have failed until recently. *The world had expected Renraku to make the next AI breakthrough.* Fuchi says it will not bring an AI online any time soon	arc, printed on a player handout in August 2053. **Read it aloud once. Never mention it again for seven in-game years**
⚠⚠ **A Universal Brotherhood soup kitchen's premises destroyed in an unexplained explosion and fire**	**2.11** and **Season 3** — the first UB item the players ever see, and it is buried in a news round-up
⚠ **Rioting at the Byrne Projects in Chicago; a security firm attacked**	**Season 3** — Chicago is sealed, and they read about the beginning of it here
Himem's grudge	Any season — a decker antagonist the players humiliated
Wallace, FBI	Any season; ★ the cleanest source of jobs that are not corporate
Jetblack and the Nightstalkers	A vampire gang boss who owes them, and a band with money
⚠ **Lone Star remembers being wrong and does not thank them**	The whole campaign. This is the relationship they will have with the Star for ten years

> **CROSSOVER — none, deliberately.** The Fourth World has no business in this episode, and a season should not end on a correspondence. Season One's crossover load was carried by **1.3** (Hestaby's agent), **1.4** (Caimbeul and Ehran) and **1.6** (the Tír's long reach); that is enough for a pilot season and the players should close the year thinking they have been in a story about Seattle.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

Everything the season did to their reputation. Whether Lone Star already had their faces from the Stuffer Shack, whether the Salish will let them cross a border, whether a fixer will vouch for them while a warrant is live — all of it decides how bad the middle of this adventure is. ★ The frame-up is the season's exam.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠ **They have to run from the police, and some tables will not want to.** Make the escalation visible — second car, third car, SWAT — so that fleeing reads as tactics rather than cowardice.
- ★★★ **Deliver the toast carefully.** *"To absent friends, and to those who are no further away than sunset."* Say it once, let the Perception test call it a band tradition, and move on. A table that remembers it two sessions later has earned three Karma and the best scene in the module.
- ★★ **Play the compound assault off-stage.** Fifty gangers against seventy corporate guards is not a combat, it is weather. Narrate it around the players and resolve only what touches them.
- ⚠ **Do not let them profit from the vampire.** The bootleg simsense is worth thousands and costs them the only genuinely warm relationship in the season.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Read the newsnet aloud, all of it, including the nonsense.** Hurricanes, a basketball franchise denied to Portland, artificial-plant fashion, and **hundreds of kilometres of unexplained blue slime washing onto New Zealand out of the Pacific.** The Fuchi item has to arrive as one story among many, in a paper full of noise. That is the entire trick, and it has to hold for seven years.

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SEASON ONE — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

⭐ **A ledger for the gamemaster, to be checked before Season Two opens.** Everything below was planted in the first nine episodes and none of it has been explained to the players.

Planted	Where	Collected
The Fuchi symbolic-processor announcement	1.9 newsnet	**Season 7**
Daisy Quallon works for a great dragon	1.3	**Season 8**
Genealogy file 8-007 and its one deleted record	1.4	**4.3**
Ehran's manuscript, and his pen in a glass case	1.4 · 1.8	**Season 4**
APN survivors who saw their faces	1.8	**2.8**
Tír Tairngire runs assets in Seattle; the team is on a list	1.6	**Season 4**
Aztechnology funds things it does not explain	1.5	**2.1 → 3.2 → 4.6**
Three fire elementals at the Renraku arcology, no statement issued	1.5 newsnet	**Seasons 6–7**
A Universal Brotherhood building burns	1.9 newsnet	**2.11 → Season 3**
Rioting in Chicago	1.9 newsnet	**Season 3**
A cyberzombie nobody can name	1.2	**Seasons 6–7**
Villiers and Lanier, met in person, owed a favour	1.2	**Seasons 6–7**

⚠⚠ **Three relationships also carry forward and should be written into the save now:** what Lone Star thinks of them, whether the Salish will let them across a border, and which of the season's five potential allies — Daisy, Freya, Fierelle, Jetblack, Wallace — actually survived contact with this particular group of players.

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SEASON TWO · The Things Underneath

Late 2053 into 2054. Streetwise band, 20–50 Karma.

Season One was about learning a city. Season Two is about magic ceasing to be a tool the team hires and becoming a thing that happens *to* them — a spirit that adopts them, an idol nobody will explain, a dragon that appears as somebody else's backstop, and finally a chamber under a Seattle building with a queen in it.

Eleven episodes, and two of them are unrelated jobs on paper that are secretly halves of the same story. The season ends with the players holding a truth that the world will refuse to believe for another year, and being laughed at for saying it out loud.

⚠ **Scheduling rules that matter this season:** *Mercurial* runs **before** *Queen Euphoria*, because the latter hires teams with big-star experience. *Bottled Demon* runs **between** Harlequin chapters, not near them. And *Missing Blood* **must** be the finale — it has to land before the exposé that opens Season Three.

2.1 · Mercurial

SOURCE

📕 ***Mercurial*** (FASA #7203, by Tom Dowd) — an early module, SR1/SR2-compatible, needing only the core rules and its own tables. Written for 2050; re-date to late 2053 and nothing else moves.

⚠ **A two-part adventure**, and long. Part One is a bodyguard job that collapses; Part Two is a legwork race and an assault. Budget for it accordingly.

⭐ **Run it before *Queen Euphoria* (2.9)** — that module specifically hires teams with experience protecting a big name.

WHAT HAPPENS

The job is five days of bodywork for a rock star. Maria Mercurial — silver-skinned, metal-limbed, synth-linking her music through her own cyber-muscles — has left her manager for a new agent, and the new agent says the old one is making threats. Five thousand each, five days, until the old contract legally lapses.

⭐⭐ **Meeting her is the reason to run this module.** She shifts between three personas *mid-conversation* and the text names them: the **Amazon**, her fierce stage self, Aztlan-accented and dangerous; the **Schoolmistress**, subdued and factual; and the **Innocent**, wistful and childlike. ⚠ She will never admit that she uses dreamchips, never discuss her cyberware, and never acknowledge that she has no memory at all of her life before her manager found her.

What is actually true, and the players assemble it across two parts:

Until five years ago, Maria belonged to a senior Aztechnology executive. He had her rebuilt, loaded her skull with **sealed headware memory**, and hooked her on custom chips to keep her obedient. In 2045 she killed him and ran, and was found in the Barrens as a chip-addicted prostitute, singing for coins. ⚠⚠⚠ **And the only copy of his report on a toxic-waste cover-up — a subsidiary that buried industrial waste under a Seattle slum and murdered the shift techs who knew — is inside her head. She has been carrying it, unknowingly, for five years.**

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A developer is now about to break that tank open. So Aztechnology wants its data back, and has hired people to take her, extract it, and stage her death and her old manager's as a murder-suicide.

⚠ **The frame was laid before the runners were ever hired.** A yakuza mage showed Maria fabricated evidence that her manager dealt in the chips she now loathes. She left him. Her new agent — five hundred thousand nuyen in debt to a yakuza loan shark — was handed her career as payment, and it is *he* who hires the team, in good faith, to guard against a threat that does not exist.

The dressing room door comes in during the first night. Three street samurai with bone-white skin dye and red glowing eyes that are **not** cyberware: they are drugged into a berserk state and a mage is watching through them. Their orders are to take Maria alive, kill everyone else, and shout the right thing in gutter Spanish so it lands on the ex-manager. ⚠⚠ **The drug is ninety-five per cent fatal when it wears off, so there is nobody to interrogate** — and the mage watching through their eyes will recognise the team later.

Then the team is on the run, with someone paying ten thousand nuyen for word of where they are. ⚠ Working the street is dangerous in a specific and nasty way: gangs want them *alive* for the bounty, so ambushes come with stun rounds and batons rather than bullets.

⚠⚠ **And the phone book is poisoned.** Looking the ex-manager up in directory assistance returns a number the yakuza bribed into the listing; it rings a front who will agree to any meeting and never appear. The real number is one Maria knows by heart, and the discrepancy is itself the clue.

☆☆☆ **The emotional centre of the module is a quiet, half-drunk man in a flat full of photographs. Armando Hernandez** emigrated from Aztlan in the twenties. Five years ago in the Barrens he heard a silver-limbed girl singing a *cantamuerte* in a brothel — **so he killed her pimp to get her out**, dried her out from the chips that were being used to control her, and built her a career. He does not know why she left him. He has no idea what was done to her before he found her. The evidence she found was planted.

⚠⚠ **He was framed, he is her protector, and killing him is the tragic error this adventure is built to allow.** If the players do it, Maria becomes an implacable enemy the moment she learns.

Decking the agent's system produces the smoking gun — a private diary entry, dated the day Maria "found" her evidence, celebrating that the yakuza have handed him her career and settled his debt. ☆ The guard program is a teddy bear called Gum E. Bear.

Part One ends at the hideout, with Maria cornered, her pistol locked empty, and the yakuza mage holding out a dreamchip — and then ☆☆ **a dragon comes through the wall.** He burns the mage, takes Maria, and is gone.

⚠ **The cleanup is one of the most Shadowrun images in the KB.** The dragon then incinerates the agent who hired the team — a charred corpse in melted gold jewellery — and a drunk on the corner sees the whole thing: *"I saw it — a fraggin' DRAGON, man! ...it just burns this one dude down... the wiz-worm's up in the sky an' laughin'."*

Part Two is a race, and it resolves into three findings: the developer paving the Barrens stopped all work the week Maria left her manager; the polymers firm that buried the waste is a wholly-owned Aztechnology subsidiary; and both the abandoned plant and a derelict twenty-eight-storey tower nearby belong to it.

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⭐⭐⭐ **And somewhere in the middle of that, the players read the maker's mark on Maria's thigh.** It leads to an eccentric Chiba body-sculptor who does about fifty jobs a year at several times the going rate, whose masterworks are numbered, and who takes borderline corporate commissions — *modifying people into toys for their owners' pleasure, like human bonsai trees.*

Maria is number eighty-four. The commission specified silver dermal replacement, heightened reflexes, ⚠⚠ **a sealed memory space transparent to scanning**, and direct-interface work routing her datajack **through the brain's pleasure and pain centres** — intensifying everything she does through it *"to the point of endangering the subject's sanity."* Then customised simsense at illegally high amplitude until dependence, which takes ten days.

⭐⭐ **This is why every appliance in her condominium has manual controls and she never jacks into anything willingly.** She only ever synth-links her music. A GM who plants that detail early and explains it here has done the best work available in this module.

The Dragon Knights are the corporate team hunting her, and they are a reusable roster:

- **Kyle Morgan**, handsome, ruthless, professional — and ⚠⚠ quietly in love with Maria, which is his fatal flaw.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Perianwyr**, "Peri" — a **western dragon**, Morgan's oldest friend, a vintage rock enthusiast who lairs on the tower roof with a chronologically ordered music library.
- **Mixacopotec**, a scarred Aztlan mercenary with an obsidian-spiked club who tortures people with dreamchips for pleasure.
- ⭐ **Blackstone**, a dwarf technician whose wife died in corporate custody trying to flee the dependents' facility and whose two-year-old is missing — and whom Aztechnology has already secretly marked for liquidation once this job is done. **He will change sides if the runners tell him what happened to his family.**
- And guardians the dragon trained: two griffins, a cockatrice, a basilisk. ⭐ Each has exactly one handler; kill the handler and the animal goes wild on everyone.

⭐⭐⭐ **THE LONG FALL is the ending, and it should be run exactly as written.** Morgan, caught between his employer and the woman, will not surrender and will not take cover. Cornered indoors, **the dragon shatters the window — and cannot flame the runners without incinerating his friend.** *"Kyle, get DOWN!"* Morgan ignores him. If the runners wound the dragon, Morgan's concentration breaks, and the next shot can kill him.

⚠⚠ **Perianwyr erupts in a bellow of grief, dives after the falling body, and both of them vanish into the smoke.** Morgan is dead and his body is never recovered. The dragon simply disappears.

⭐ And if Maria is a prisoner when they arrive, they find the torturer standing over her with an injector, grinning — and **Morgan shoots him in the head.** *"And then there was one."* Then turns on the runners anyway.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Maria**, if she lives — free of the last thing anyone was holding over her, and now knowing what was done to her and by whom.
- ⭐ **Armando Hernandez**, if they worked out in time that he was the victim rather than the threat.
- ⭐⭐ **The Perfekto data** — a documented corporate cover-up including the murder of witnesses. **They can publish it, sell it, destroy it, or hold it.** Holding it over Aztechnology is the most dangerous option and the most interesting.

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- ⚠ **Blackstone**, if they told him the truth about his family, and whatever he chose to do about it.
- ⚠⚠ **And a grieving dragon who knows their faces**, and who lost the person he cared about most because of a shot one of them fired.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆ **The Aztlan spine, second panel**	**3.2 DNA/DOA → 4.6 Harlequin's Back.** ⚠ Play all four as one institution
☆☆☆ **Perianwyr, alive**	Any season. **A western dragon with a personal reason to remember them** — grief, not policy
The buried tank and the murdered technicians	Leverage; ☆ or a news story the players choose to break
The body-sculptor and his numbered "Ultras"	The cyberware-horror thread; ⚠ Maria is not the only one he made
Maria Mercurial	A famous, unstable, extremely well-connected ally
Experience guarding a celebrity	**2.9 Queen Euphoria** hires specifically on that reputation

☆☆ **CROSSOVER — Aztechnology, second panel. Identities were laid out at 1.5; do not restate them.**

☆☆ **What this episode adds is a feeling rather than a fact.** By the end of it the players should have an unjustifiable sense about this corporation: that its cruelty is procedural rather than opportunistic. In 1.5 it funded a man who wanted to cut his daughter's heart out. Here it commissioned a woman rebuilt as a container, wired so that using her own body hurt or pleased her on command. **Neither is a corporate decision that makes financial sense. Both are liturgical.** That feeling is the deliverable, and it is what makes the Season 4 reveal land.

⚠ **A note on the dragon: Perianwyr is deliberately unassigned.** He has no Fourth World identity in this campaign and should never be given one. The register's own principle applies — **an unassigned dragon is not a gap.** If every dragon the players meet turns out to be someone, the ones who *are* someone stop mattering.

⚠ **Filing note for the author:** both `ivy-and-chrome.json` and `mercurial.json` describe the Aztlan run as *ivy → dna-doa → mercurial*, but the season map runs *ivy (1.5) → mercurial (2.1) → dna-doa (3.2)*. **The season map is right and this document follows it**; the two JSON blocks have the middle two swapped.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None from Season One, and that is worth noticing — **this is a fresh start after a season finale that nearly destroyed them.** Open on ordinary work.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Shift Maria's personas without announcing them.** Change how she speaks mid-answer, and never explain. A player who works out that they are talking to three people is having the intended experience.
- ⚠⚠ **Nobody can be interrogated after the first fight.** The attackers die of the drug. Make sure the trail is findable through the phone discrepancy and the agent's system instead, or the adventure stalls at the end of Part One.

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- ⭐⭐ **Protect Hernandez from the players.** He is a half-drunk stranger with a room full of photographs of the woman they are guarding, and he looks exactly like a stalker. Give them at least two chances to check before they act.
- ⭐ **Blackstone is the door.** A corporate team with a member whose family the corporation destroyed is a fortress with a man inside holding a key. Let the legwork surface his wife's death.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not soften the Long Fall, and do not let the dragon be a boss fight.** He is there because his friend is there. When it goes wrong he does not take revenge on the runners — he goes after the body. **Let them stand in the wreckage of somebody else's love story and understand that they caused it.**

2.2 · Total Eclipse

SOURCE

📕 ***Total Eclipse*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition. ⚠ Requires *The Grimoire*; the Salish-Shidhe material and the *Seattle Sourcebook* help but are not needed.

Written for late 2051; re-date into late 2053 and nothing breaks.

⭐⭐ **Karma, per player:** surviving **+2** · each band member successfully kidnapped **+1** · **disrupting the ritual +3** · **defeating Eclipse and his allies +3**.

⚠⚠ **Read that table twice. The module pays them for doing the job, and then pays them three times as much for betraying the man who hired them.** The players are the villains for the first half of this adventure, and it is designed that way.

WHAT HAPPENS

The job is a snatch, and it is not even a violent one. A Johnson at a repellent pink strip club in the Barrens explains that a rising band called **The Elementals** have broken their recording contract and walked off with the only copy of their album. He wants the four members gently persuaded to come to his condominium by midnight, and he wants a copy of the master. Five thousand a head, five thousand more for the album. ⚠ **Do not damage them** — damaged merchandise means no payment — and keep it quiet.

He even supplies the tools: four narcojet pistols and a reload each.

⭐ **The master is split across four audiochips, one carried by each member**, as a deliberate anti-theft measure. All four are needed, which is why all four people are needed.

The band leaves the studio on four bikes in four directions, and the middle of this module is four completely different problems:

- ⭐ **Whispering Wind**, the singer, lives behind serious security in Bellevue. Caught unawares she is washing her hair. Forewarned, she ambushes from her own skylight with a submachine gun, a concussion grenade and **two mercenaries who owed her dead father favours.** Her chip is on the dresser, beside a crank twentieth-century mysticism book.
- ⭐⭐ **Wildfire**, the elf guitarist, runs an arcade deep in the Barrens that is **a gang-neutral zone he personally enforces** — a gang that broke his no-violence rule got a high-explosive missile — and he mediates meets between rival gangs in the back room. ⚠ Any runner wearing colours will be shot at on sight.

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- ⚠⚠ **Bambi**, the troll drummer, is night watchman at his family's troll-scale department store, and he is the trap. If he notices a tail, he leads it into a dead-end alley where his brothers have strung **monofilament wire at head height.**
- ☆☆☆ **Coyote**, the bassist, does not live anywhere interesting. He rides out weekly to a squatters' camp of transient Amerindians at a derelict hotel, carrying food, because they were kind to him once. ⚠ **If a squatter dies in the attempt, he surrenders immediately to stop it.**

One is a fortress, one is a peacemaker, one is an ambush, and one is a decent man who can be beaten by threatening people he loves. **How the team takes him is the first real question this season asks about them.**

At the delivery, something is wrong and it is visible. The band is docile — because they are wearing necklaces that are **spell locks carrying a Control Thoughts spell.** ☆ A runner who eavesdrops on the Johnson's "private word" with them hears no words at all, only the snap of metal clasps.

Then the second job: escort the Johnson, the band and a famous trideo director across the border into Salish-Shidhe land to shoot a music video, because the filming licence has lapsed and new paperwork would take six months. Twenty-five thousand, leaving immediately.

⚠⚠ **All of it is a lie.** The Johnson is **Eclipse**, a retired top-flight shadowrunner and a **spider shaman**. He does not care that the team has seen his home, because he intends for them to be dead by morning.

Here is what is actually happening. Centuries ago, magicians sealed a number of evil free spirits into a cave in the Australian outback. ☆☆☆ **Recently a well-meaning novice shaman removed the stone that sealed it** — this is Sam Verner, in *Find Your Own Truth*, and it is the same event the campaign's spirit-release beat hangs on — and several got out.

One of them, **Twilight**, came back to the place of power where it was first summoned, which is now inside Salish-Shidhe territory. But centuries of binding and the journey have left it **dissolving**, and it cannot re-energise alone. So it made contact with the nearest spider shaman and offered a covenant: find me the ritual that heals me, and I will serve you. ⚠ It has no intention of honouring that for long.

After five fruitless months Eclipse heard his answer in a bar — a demo track called *"Healing the Spirit."* The singer had unknowingly channelled ancestral memory and real ritual fragments, buried in a pre-Awakening crackpot's book, into her songs. **Her music works.**

Three ways the second half can go.

If the team **accepts**, they cross at the least-patrolled stretch of border — ⚠ except that the destination is sacred, so the Salish patrol sweeps it more often than Eclipse's information says. ☆ A good negotiation can persuade the patrol to escort them to the "filming site," at which point the patrol walks into a pack of fleeing ghouls.

If the team **declines**, Eclipse ties off the loose end by hiring an old friend: a mage assassin who **recently became a vampire** — a victim drained him and failed to finish the job, so he turned, and then killed the thing that infected him. He hides what he is behind a rumour that he uses an Essence-drain *spell*. ⚠ He fights to the death rather than let anyone who has worked it out walk away.

If the team **follows**, they find what Eclipse's people did to the border patrol — burned, arrow-riddled, mauled by something animal — and then get ambushed near the clearing by his bodyguard,

shooting arrows from a tree before closing with a katana, and by the trideo director, who is a **wolf shapeshifter** and goes for the throat.

⚠⚠ **And in that last case, keep an exact record of how long the fight takes, because the band has been playing the entire time.**

The clearing is already occupied. A **banshee** sits on the central stone slab, ringed by **ten ghouls** who live in a nearby burial site and are enchanted to die defending her. Eclipse looks at all of it and says: *"clear the area — time is money."*

☆☆☆ **THE SHADOW CONCERT is one of the best-built climaxes in the KB.** An hour before dawn, battery floodlights, recorders on the slab, and the band begins to play. Fog creeps in. A bright point of light near them starts to widen.

The team has five combat turns. On turn three, Twilight begins to emerge. On turn six it has manifested completely and at full strength — ⚠⚠ **a three-metre spider.** And ⚠⚠⚠ **it cannot be damaged at all before it fully manifests.**

☆☆ **So the answer is never the spider. The answer is the band.** Five turns to stop four spell-locked musicians from finishing a song, while their controller attacks the moment anyone interferes. If the ritual completes, Twilight ignores the band entirely, drains the runners' Essence, and it and Eclipse set about killing every witness.

☆ **Two facts worth having ready:** Twilight is severely allergic and vulnerable to **silver**. And **killing Eclipse breaks the spell locks on the band.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠ **For once, no corporation is angry with them.** This adventure creates no corporate enemies at all — which by Season Two is unusual enough to be worth noticing.
- ☆ **The Elementals**, alive or otherwise, and whatever they think of the people who kidnapped them. **A band whose songs contain real ritual is a remarkable thing to have as a contact.**
- ⚠⚠ **Specific vendettas, if the kidnaps went badly.** The singer's father's old mercenary friends. The guitarist's gangs, who lost a neutral ground. The drummer's brothers. ☆ Each is named in the module and each is earned.
- ⚠ **NAN trouble**, if dead border guards can be traced to them — ☆ and if 1.5 already soured the Salish, this is where that compounds.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠ **Twilight, if it survived**	An open hunt; ☆ a free spirit that owes them and is no longer dissolving
☆☆ **Renraku moves to buy the Seattle public ferry system**	**Seasons 6–7** — one more piece of the city quietly becoming corporate before the arcology seals
⚠⚠ **The Humanis Policlub riots at City Hall against an official Awakening Day**	**3.1 Peacekeeper**, where the players meet a Humanis chapter head who will run for president
Dr. Raven, credited in the newsnet	A standing Seattle fixture the players have now heard of before they meet him
The mysticism book, and a bloodline that can read it	Any season; ☆ real ritual fragments in a crank paperback is a hook that keeps

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> **CROSSOVER — none, and here is a trap to avoid.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not connect Twilight to the Horrors.** This adventure opens with *evil spirits sealed away by ancient magicians and recently released*, which sounds exactly like the thing the players will be told about in **4.6 Harlequin's Back**. It is not. Twilight is a free spirit out of a Sixth World novel's plot, and the two have nothing to do with each other.

> ☆☆ **Letting the players believe otherwise costs you the Season 4 reveal**, because the Enemy stops being unique the moment it has a rehearsal. If a player proposes the link, do not confirm it and do not deny it — let the difference become obvious later, when they meet the real thing and it does not behave anything like this.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE FIRST REAL PAYOFF OF THE CAMPAIGN, AND IT IS ON A PLAYER HANDOUT.** Both versions of the closing newsnet carry the same item: **Global Technology has been caught manufacturing illegal emotion-rich BTL chips.** Its stock has collapsed and **Hollywood Simsense is taking the company over.**

⚠⚠ **That is 1.7 Dreamchipper, resolving in print, two episodes later.** If the team handed the dreamchips back — the choice worth thirty thousand a head — then Global went into production, got caught, and has now been swallowed by the rival firm anyway. **And the executive who runs that firm is the enemy they personally made in 1.7**, the one the module says would love a chance to make them miserable. He now owns the technology *and* the company.

☆ Hand them the newsnet and say nothing whatsoever. Let whoever argued for handing the chips back read it themselves.

⚠ If they destroyed the chips instead, the item still runs — Global was making illegal BTLs on its own account, which is exactly why Urlan would not say what was on those prototypes.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆ **Run the four kidnaps as four different puzzles, not four fights.** A narcojet pistol, a locked store, an arcade full of neutral gangers and a camp of squatters are four separate design problems, and the module gives each one a non-violent solution.
- ☆☆☆ **Show them the necklaces.** The spell locks are visible, the clasps are audible, and the band's docility is wrong. Every player who notices and says nothing is making a choice, and it is worth remembering when the Karma is handed out.
- ⚠⚠ **Time the pre-clearing fight.** The music does not stop while the players are busy. If they spend twelve turns on an ambush, say so, and let the glow be brighter when they arrive.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Make the five-turn window explicit in the fiction.** Describe the light widening, describe the third turn, and let them work out that the spider cannot be hurt yet. **A team that charges the manifestation instead of the stage loses.**
- ☆ **Silver.** If anyone in the party has silver on them, let a Magic Theory test recall the weakness. It is the difference between a fight and a slaughter.

2.3 · Harlequin, chapter 3 — PAST

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305), mini-adventure 3 of 8, ⚠ requiring *The Grimoire*. Thread rules at **1.4**; the previous beat was **1.8**, six episodes ago.

Karma: surviving **+1** · acquiring the **real** tome **+1** · ☆ **leaving the valise properly +1** · ⚠⚠ **bringing back the FALSE tome −2.**

☆☆☆ **PLAY THIS ONE FUNNY, AND THE BOOK SAYS SO.** Its own note to the gamemaster: *"It should be obvious by now that this particular segment has its tongue firmly planted in its cheek. It is certainly possible to run* Past *in a serious and straight manner, but, hey, don't ya think the runners deserve a little bit of weird every so often?"*

⚠ It also warns that the opposition may be too strong, and suggests simply penalising the enemy's initiative by a flat amount to hand the runners the advantage. **Take the note. This is the campaign's comedy episode, and it is sitting deliberately between two very dark ones.**

WHAT HAPPENS

The chapter opens on Orwell — *who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past* — and then immediately stops being serious.

The invitation arrives as an assault. Three hired musclemen come poking around the team's bar; the barkeep, an old runner himself *"before the Seoul Men had him hardwired to the counter,"* handles it, and the runners come back to find the trio *"sprawled unconscious on the tavern floor, unbloodied but quite motionless."* ☆ *"It was probably part of a test. Probably, you've passed."* The card left behind reads: **The Place: After. The Time: Nine Tonight. The Reason: A Job Offer.**

☆☆ **"After" is a private club, and the description is worth reading aloud verbatim:** *"The place looks like a bomb hit it, but then you see that's actually the decorative motif."* Meeting nooks set into craters in the floor, rubble strewn about for effect, tables and chairs deformed as though partially melted, the smell of ozone sharp in the air, and the lighting dim except for the blinding flashes of simulated nuclear detonations.

The Johnson is a French-accented elf — *especially the way she trills her r's* — and the job has two halves going to the same place. **A pickup:** a certain book is overdue and they will collect it. **And a delivery:** a valise, locked tight and quite harmless. Forty thousand each.

⚠⚠ **She has no idea what she is part of.** She handles transatlantic work and assumes this is the usual espionage. The book's own aside: *"If she knew what was in the valise, she might be horrified."*

☆☆☆ **And the valise is the relay.** A locked aluminium satchel, only twenty by twenty-five centimetres but *heavy for its size*, marked in red as perishable medical supplies, with a readout in the handle showing **250** and valves in the base that occasionally leak cold, cloudy vapour. Two hundred and fifty **Kelvin**.

⚠⚠ It is refrigerated because it contains **the six false elven ear tips the team cut off in 1.8** — and the module's instruction is exactly four words long: *"but don't tell them."*

The book they are collecting is a medieval manuscript about fifteen centimetres thick between wooden covers, delicate with age, and identifiable two ways: the cover is engraved *Pandemonicus*

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Faustus / Collectanea Occultica, and ⚠⚠ **the frontispiece shows the archdemon Asmodeus, painted in a long-lost monastic technique that makes the blood-red ink look wet.**

The flight out is a set piece and a passenger list. A transorbital with a shark-tooth emblem that gives it *"an oddly predatory look,"* and a cabin full of people worth describing: an Eskimo shaman fingering animal icons on a leather thong; three elderly Japanese businessmen in first class who are nothing of the kind and who will fight without ever engaging their cyberware; a green-haired woman apparently singing but making no sound, whose augmentation restraints are dummies and who is carrying a concealed net gun for the airline; and ⚠ **a frazzled woman leading a young ork child who seems ashamed of his appearance — until another passenger points at him and says something that makes his own companions burst out laughing.**

☆ That last one costs nothing, takes four seconds, and tells the players more about this world than a sourcebook page.

Then a hijacking that is entirely a misunderstanding. A pro-imperial German policlub was watching the Johnson's meeting; her work is often done for French interests; therefore these runners must be enemies. The module's own summary is *"GO FIGURE."* Four of them set off a smoke bomb — visibility one metre, and vigorous activity costs a turn to a wracking cough unless resisted — intending to kill the team and plant evidence framing them as hijackers who never existed.

⚠⚠ **And their decker, to free her friends, jacks the shuttle and disarms the cyberware restraints — all of them, because she cannot do it selectively.** ☆☆ The instruction that makes this great: *"It is possible to determine whether a bracelet is activated only by close examination, so don't tell the players the status of their characters' bracelets unless they actually ask."*

The chapter then hands over a complete zero-gravity ruleset, which is worth keeping: crawling hand over hand at half Quickness with a test each turn not to lose your grip; launching yourself to travel metres equal to your Strength, unable to change direction in flight without grabbing something; a test to land feet-first and damage if you botch it; missile and thrown attacks penalised; and anyone who attacks or is struck in melee tumbling away in a random direction unless they hold on.

The overland leg is a travelogue that keeps trying to kill them. A bullet train *"shark-nosed and gray, looking like a worm of technology rather than a passenger vehicle,"* with twin autocannon cupolas every fourth car. Seven separate teams of customs agents, one per German state, stamping actual paper. Then a soot-streaked, bullet-scarred local train that crosses four more borders in three hours, and two American dog trainers who explain that *"these Germans are pushovers for hunting dogs. Especially man-killers. But we don't do any of that cyberstuff. Our dogs are strictly pure, no scything claws or venom glands."*

⚠⚠ **The shakedown is a "customs check" with no customs agent attached** — soldiers in unbuttoned uniforms and food-stained clothing, unwashed and unshaven, because the local baron is a brigand and has sent his men to extract booty from the train. They invent a paperwork problem, demand a fine, admire a runner's belongings as a possible donation, and fire a burst through the roof to frighten a farming couple.

☆☆ **And the language trap is the funniest mechanic in the book:** every German NPC speaks Bavarian dialect at a penalty, *"the only character who can translate is Sheila the dog trainer — and she gets the interpretation wrong half the time."*

⚠ Then a **putsch** interrupts the shakedown: gunfire, a shattered window, a gas canister rolling up the aisle, and the conductor saying the word while miming a pistol to his own head. (*"Pooch?"* says the dog trainer. *"They're killing our dogs, honey. I've got to get to the baggage compartment!"*) Four ork "liberators" arrive in a light panzer, considerably more interested in capturing the train than in anyone aboard it.

☆ **The way out is a detail nobody points at.** The brigand soldiers fight to the death out of a grim code of honour — and *because they are unfamiliar with trains, it never occurs to any of them to man the exposed cupola guns.* A runner who climbs up there and surprises the panzer at close range ends the whole thing.

The valley is a postcard with a police state under it. Peasants in lederhosen working the fields beside the latest cybertractors, no aerials, no neon, no graffiti, and the scent of baking apples. Above it, the castle on *"our very own Matterhorn,"* linked to the valley by a deceptively thin cable.

☆☆ **The Director of Tourism greets them by name — "Welcome, chumlichen!" — and she is the baron's chief of intelligence.** She arranges tournaments and hotel dances and conducts driving tours, and she quizzes strangers about their holiday plans while using her intuition to find spies. ⚠ She keeps her magical ability secret. If she sees the valise she will ask, brightly, *"What an interesting item! Is one of you a doctor?"*

☆☆☆ **And the module hands the gamemaster the single best roleplay mechanic in the campaign:** when she leaves, make a **secret opposed Intelligence test** between her and whichever player did most of the talking — ☆ **but lower that player's target number if they roleplayed the conversation well.** Win and she is not yet suspicious. Lose and she attaches herself to them for the entire day as a tour guide.

Two more things are in the village. The Gothic church is the headquarters of the local **resistance**, and its priest will shelter and heal the team if they need it. And the town hall keeps files on every single resident — ⚠⚠ which is a clue to something the players will not think about until it is too late: **the youth hostel where their gear is delivered has concealed cameras in it.**

Getting into the castle has exactly one wrong answer. A villager explains it with a smile that may be a leer: every week the neighbouring count sends a spy drone, and every week the baron shoots it down. *"Paranoid about the skies, our baron is."* ⚠ **Do not fly in.**

That leaves a two-day mountain hike under drone patrols; the cable tram, whose valley station has **no controls at all** because everything is operated from the castle — ☆ though the team can ride on the roof gripping the bracket, against cold and wind, roped together so that whoever fails does not simply slide off; or the cliff, four faces of escalating difficulty where a bad roll means *"the climber falls to his death unless he succeeds at an Athletics test. (O.K., so maybe near death. It's the gamemaster's decision.)"*

⚠⚠⚠ **And here is the joke the whole chapter is built on. The security is letting them in.**

> *"Rather than kill the runners immediately, Munchmaussen wants to find out what they are up to. Therefore, the guards are instructed to play dead if shot at, to surrender when possible, and to cooperate with the intruders without making them suspicious."*

He believes they are Yankee hitmen sent by his enemies, and **he believes the valise is a bomb.** He is letting them walk in so that they will betray their own mission in front of him.

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Which they do, in the library — a comfortable old study with a fire, shelves of books with real pages, an antique globe and a priceless cut-glass chandelier. The volume on the stand is engraved exactly right. ⚠⚠ **And it has no Asmodeus frontispiece, because it is a replica.** The real one is lying open on a coffee table in the baron's own quarters. **He has been reading it.**

The moment they show they know the difference, he steps into the room: *"So that's all you were looking for, nicht war? I am so disappointed."*

☆☆ **The counter-clue is one test.** A runner who thinks to look at the fireplace **sees the lizard-like feet of two fire elementals standing in the flames.**

⚠ The fight that follows is conducted in Bavarian German and constrained by everyone's priorities: the mage will not cast openly because she is protecting her secret, preferring a Mana Bolt from behind; the elementals are ordered to engulf rather than project flame while anything valuable is in the way, and **forbidden to use Flame Aura at all because the keep has no sprinklers**; and everybody is being careful of the valise, because they think it will explode.

☆☆ *"When the baron or his guards try to hack open the box, they discover the refrigerated Elven ears."*

☆☆☆ **And underneath the farce there is a real man.** The baron is *"a sick troll, afflicted with a painful rheumatism that has caused him to abandon his former lifestyle of constant excess and frequent travel."* He swims four laps every night, keeps a boxing ring he can no longer use, and spends long hours in a steam room because the heat eases the pain.

⚠⚠ **It is his unconscious longing for death that makes him take greater and greater risks — including toying with people he believes are assassins.**

☆ He is chasing the book because he believes trolls lived in Bavaria in the Dark Ages, that a *"mini-Awakening"* happened then, and that his own family descends from them. **The tome is worth more to him than his life, because he thinks it proves it.** ⚠ He is not consciously suicidal: if he clearly cannot keep it, he escapes — through a hall whose security cameras show a false view of building work, and which is actually a hangar with a folding roof and a rising floor — intending to hunt the runners down later, at a time and place of his own choosing.

⚠ **And back in Seattle, the Johnson is waiting, and she mysteriously knows every detail of what happened inside that castle.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Forty thousand each**, and a medieval grimoire they will hand over unread.
- ☆ **A European resistance priest** who owes them nothing and helped anyway.
- ⚠⚠ **Possibly a troll baron with a grudge and an aircraft**, who has decided to deal with them on his own schedule.
- ☆ **Zero-gravity experience**, which almost nobody in the shadows has.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And the unsettling fact that their employer's employer knew everything.** ☆ This is the first time the players are given a reason to wonder who is actually behind these jobs. Let it sit.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆ **The valise, left behind**	The relay's second hand-off. Chapter 4 leaves the tome's frontispiece somewhere and picks up the next object

⭐⭐⭐ **The Johnson knowing what happened inside the castle**	**4.5**, when the players finally learn there has been someone above every Johnson they have met
Father Braun and the Munchmaussen underground	A European foothold; ⭐ useful the moment a run goes wrong on that continent
The baron, if he lived	An eccentric, wealthy, aircraft-owning enemy with a personal timetable
The zero-G ruleset	⭐ Reusable, and **6.1 Mission: Mars** will want it

> ⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — nothing is planted here, but the baron is accidentally right, and that is worth knowing.**
>
> Munchmaussen's theory is that a **"mini-Awakening" occurred during the Dark Ages** and that trolls lived in Bavaria then. He is a figure of fun — a sick, lonely, obsessive nobleman chasing an antique book — and **he is correct about the shape of the world.** Magic runs in cycles; there was a previous peak; the Fourth World was it.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not confirm anything, do not have him find proof, and do not let a player character work it out here.** The point of this chapter is that a comic minor NPC is closer to the truth than anyone he will ever convince, and nobody in the room knows it — including him.
>
> ⭐ If the players later run the Fourth World half of this project, one of them will eventually remember a troll in a castle who thought his ancestors had been magical, and was laughed at.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

The valise. The players are carrying the trophies from 1.8 across an ocean in a refrigerated case, and they will hand them over without ever opening it. ⚠ If anyone does force it, the module's own contingency stands: it is a container of severed cosmetic ear tips, it explains nothing, and it is far more disturbing than an explanation would have been.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Commit to the tone.** Craters in a nightclub floor, a translator who is wrong half the time, a putsch interrupting a shakedown, and a castle whose guards have been told to play dead. Run it grim and it collapses; run it as farce and it is the most memorable session of the season.
- ⚠⚠ **Do not tell them their cyberware is back on.** The restraints were disabled remotely by someone else's decker, and the module is explicit — say nothing unless a player checks.
- ⭐⭐ **Use the secret opposed test, and reward good talking with a lower target number.** It is the cleanest "roleplay matters mechanically" rule in the KB and it costs nothing.
- ⚠ **The replica is the trap, not the goal.** Give them every chance to spot the missing frontispiece — it is the difference between +1 and −2 Karma, and between a heist and an ambush.
- ⭐ **Play the baron's illness straight even while everything else is a joke.** The steam room, the boxing ring he cannot use, the four laps a night. **The farce is funnier and much better if one person in it is genuinely dying.**

2.4 · Imago

SOURCE

📕 ***Imago*** (FASA, SR2E; Tom Dowd and others) — native second edition. References *Virtual Realities* for the Matrix and *Grimoire II* for free spirits; the *London Sourcebook* adds optional UK detail.

Written for late 2051; re-date into 2054 without consequence. **Set in Edinburgh and the Scottish Highlands** — the season's first proper travel adventure.

⚠⚠ **The module tells the gamemaster up front that this is not a standard run**, and it means it. There is no Johnson after the first act, no payday, and no objective that can be completed by shooting. ☆☆ **It is the gentlest thing in the knowledge base and it is a love story.**

⚠ **Needs a strong decker.** More than any other module in the first two seasons.

WHAT HAPPENS

A British megacorporation recruited an elf who had hacked straight into its central processor and then asked for a job. He called himself **Quicksilver**, he was a loner, and he was obsessed with life after death.

What he built for them was revolutionary: wetware that **encodes a personality onto chips** — feelings, memory, perception, and an integrative executive function — telemetry-linked to his own cyberdeck so that, slotted together, the person reassembles.

☆ And in the months before he died he fell in love with **Morag MacDonald**, the daughter of one of the corporation's own board members. The secret trysts in the Highlands made him careless about his security, and a rival corporation followed him to a castle near Glencoe, **murdered her, and then killed him as he ran.** It was dressed up as a clan feud and everyone accepted it.

⚠⚠ **But before the end he scattered the chips of himself across Scotland**, leaving each piece with someone he trusted, and left his deck with an academic.

The job comes from his only real friend, a technician at the corporation who has begun to sense that something of Quicksilver is still moving inside the company's system, and who hires *foreign* runners through an intermediary precisely because nobody local can be trusted.

In the Matrix they meet it. The research subsystem is sculpted as something bio-organic and unpleasant, and inside it a **child** materialises: short silver hair, silver-blue cybereyes, a sad face. It puts out its small hands and can say one thing.

> *"Amelia. Help me. Bring me to Amelia."*

Then it vanishes. ☆ It is not a program, it does not follow any known design principle, and no decker on Earth has seen anything like it. ⚠ Immediately afterwards a hostile decker inside the corporation ambushes the team's decker **and pointedly ignores their employer** — which is the first proof that somebody inside the company is covering up a murder.

⚠⚠ **And then the employer is assassinated.** The team is left with no client, no contract and no fee, eight thousand kilometres from home, holding the memory of a child asking for help.

☆☆☆ **Everything after that, they do because they choose to.**

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The four chips are four completely different encounters, and they are arranged so that the child assembles *in the worst possible order:*

- ⭐ **Feeling comes first.** The affect chip is held by a druid on the Isle of Skye, who will part with it for a symbolic price: take part in her ritual, and **leave something of yourself behind in exchange.** ⚠⚠ Slotted, it gives the child the full pain of Morag's death **with no memory of what happened** — grief without a cause, which is the most distressing scene in the module.
- ⭐⭐ **Then memory, without context.** That chip is guarded by a **free spirit on the shores of Loch Ness**, which tests the runners' nerve and their integrity rather than their guns. Slotted, the child now knows that it lost someone it loved, and can finally produce a name.
- **Then perception**, at the castle where the two of them died — obtainable by force, by negotiation with a grieving father, or ⭐ by dealing with **Morag's ghost**, who is still there.
- **And finally the integrative chip**, in an office in the Occult Sciences department at the University of Edinburgh, belonging to the woman the child has been asking for since the first scene.

⭐⭐⭐ **With all four in the deck, Quicksilver comes back — whole, adult, articulate, and perfectly aware of what has happened to him.**

And then he asks them for the actual job. He wants to be taken to the castle. He wants **a living decker to lend him their mind and spirit** so that he can come out of the deck, take form one last time, and **die properly — with Morag, so the two of them go on together.**

⚠⚠ The decker who agrees is in for an exhausting ordeal, while everyone else holds off the corporate hit team that has finally worked out where they are. **That is the climax: one person volunteering for something horrible, and their friends buying them the time.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠ **No fee.** Their client was murdered in the first act. **This is the only adventure in the first two seasons with no payday at all, and the module is entirely comfortable with that.**
- ⭐⭐ **Three friendships that predate them by lifetimes** — a druid on Skye, a free spirit in a loch, and an academic in Edinburgh — all of whom now know their names.
- ⭐ **A cyberdeck built around a biological processor** that is worth a small fortune and works properly for nobody.
- ⚠ **A corporate enemy** that murders people quietly and dresses it as local colour.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And the memory of having done something purely decent, at their own expense, a long way from home.** ⚠ Season Two has *Missing Blood* at the end of it. **Let them have this one.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐ **Rumours of an AI-research breakthrough at Transys**	**Seasons 6–7.** ⚠ This is now the **third** corporation the players have heard is chasing an artificial intelligence — Fuchi in 1.9, Renraku by implication in 1.5, and now a British one. The drumbeat matters more than any single item
⭐ **"CEO's son missing"** — a fourteen-year-old, nephew of the **Chief of the Salish-Shidhe Council**, vanished in Seattle, twenty thousand reward	Any season; ⚠ and it is a way back into the Salish relationship the team may have damaged in 1.5 or 2.2
Zeta-ImpChem	A corporate enemy that now knows their faces
⭐⭐⭐ **The idea that a person can have lived before**	**Season 4** — and see the crossover box, because this is the most important thing in the episode

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE MECHANISM, PRINTED IN CANON.

The Cast of Shadows reveals what Quicksilver actually was, and the players are never told: **he was an immortal elf.** Born in 2021 on the coast of South Wales near a complex of old Nubian and Egyptian temples, and **grown to adult size and ability by the age of ten** — the hallmark.

⚠⚠ **And the reason this episode matters to the whole two-game project is what he believed.** He saw his life as one short incarnation on a **Wheel of Rebirth**. He believed he had lived several times before. He recognised the druid on Skye and the spirit in the loch as **friends from previous lives**, which is precisely why he trusted each of them with a piece of himself. He believed the academic in Edinburgh had been close to him before. And he believed Morag was **his soul mate across successive incarnations** — which is why he kept the relationship secret, to protect a younger soul.

☆☆☆ **That is the campaign's entire reincarnation premise, stated in a published FASA module, about a character the players will meet and help.** The register's roster of who returns as whom rests on exactly this mechanic — and here it arrives with no metaplot attached, as a love story.

⚠⚠⚠ **Do not assign Quicksilver a Fourth World identity.** He is not on the roster and he should not be added to it. His value is that he **demonstrates the rule** without being an instance of anything the players will later need.

☆ **The module even puts him in the right company itself.** Its own note tells the gamemaster to treat him as a unique entity *"like Harlequin and Ehran of the Harlequin campaign... he was following his own personal karma, and this soul's been around long enough that you don't buck that."* **The text has already made the connection. You do not have to.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None — but note the arithmetic. **Three separate corporations chasing artificial intelligence have now been mentioned in front of the players in four episodes**, none of them flagged, all of them in passing. That is the Season 7 groundwork doing its work.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not put a fight in the middle of this.** The instinct will be strong around the third chip. Resist it. The module's only real combat is at the very end, and it is there so that somebody can be protected while they do something brave.
- ☆☆ **Slot the chips in order and let the horror of it land.** Pain with no cause, then memory with no context, then understanding. **A child that becomes progressively more able to comprehend its own grief is the entire emotional architecture of this adventure** — do not let the players slot them out of sequence without noticing what they have done.
- ⚠⚠ **The imago is not a precedent.** The book is blunt: *"imagos cannot and do not exist; no such free forms roam the Matrix."* If a player decker starts planning to back themselves up to chips, the answer is that nobody else can do this, and no one ever will.
- ☆ **Their guns are not coming.** UK customs penalties are severe and specific — a pistol is a heavy fine, an automatic weapon is eighteen months, high-grade cyberware is two years. **Make**

them arrive light. ⚠ Second time this season a module has stripped their kit; it is good for them.

- ☆ **Use the slang, lightly.** *Sep* for an American, *bagger* for a policeman, *boxed* for dead, *sassenach* for an Englishman. Enough that they know they are foreign, not so much that it becomes a bit.
- ☆☆ **The druid's price is the theme in miniature.** She wants them to leave something of themselves behind, and so did Quicksilver, with every friend he had. **Ask the player what they leave. Write it down.**

2.5 · Bottled Demon

SOURCE

📕 ***Bottled Demon*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition, a decision-tree module, entirely self-contained. Written for January 2050; re-date into 2054.

☆☆ **Karma, awarded to the team:** nobody corrupted by the idol **+3** · the wrong dragon does not get it **+5** · ☆☆☆ **the idol destroyed +8** · ⚠⚠⚠ **the idol not destroyed −10**, with a minimum award of zero.

Minus ten is the harshest number in the campaign, and it tells you exactly what this adventure thinks is at stake.

⚠⚠ **Schedule it *between* Harlequin chapters, never adjacent to one.** The reason is in the crossover box, and it is the best-documented piece of cross-module design in the entire knowledge base.

WHAT HAPPENS

A talismonger inherits something from a dying friend. A battered alloy briefcase, a carved wooden box, a black silk pillow — and on it a thirty-centimetre idol of deep red stone: something vaguely demonic with glowing eyes, clutching a pinkish globe, etched with symbols that are almost recognisable. It came out of a dig in the South Pacific.

⚠⚠ **It is a power focus of extraordinary strength, and it eats the people who use it.** Dreams of death and decay, physical deterioration, and a mounting, heedless greed for what it can do. It burned down the dead friend's shop. Then it burned down its new owner's.

Half-consumed already, he decides to sell, and puts out feelers to elven scholars. Word reaches **Tír Tairngire**, where a hidden buyer hires a notorious elven killer to acquire it by any means. ⚠ He murders the scholars first.

The runners are hired as bodyguards for a three-hour meet at four in the morning in a legendary Seattle wrecking yard. Their employer will not say what he is selling, or to whom, or even whether he is buying or selling — and he touches the briefcase cuffed to his wrist constantly, with the eyes of a man who has not slept properly in weeks.

⚠⚠⚠ **Everything goes wrong at once.** The buyer is the killer. Lone Star, who has been hunting that killer for months, hits the yard in force — a Citymaster through the fence, helicopters, a captain on a loudspeaker. In the chaos the elves shoot the employer, believing the deal was a set-up, and the

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runners come out of the maze of dead cars holding the case he pushed into their hands seconds before he died.

By morning their faces are on the trid as Class A felons. Lone Star has decided they are the killer's crew. And a rumour is moving through the shadows that ⚠⚠ **they murdered their own Johnson to keep the merchandise** — the one accusation the shadow community does not forgive. Contacts go cold. Safehouses stop answering. And the dead man's oldest friend begins gathering a wizards' fellowship to avenge him.

☆☆ **That fellowship is where the module quietly tests the table.** They ambush the runners in the street — and they are not warriors. They are pseudo-scholars with poor combat skills who have been lied to by a professional, and **a team that shows any restraint at all can talk them down and gain them as allies.** A team that opens fire kills a dozen amateurs who were grieving.

The way out is an old woman with a lot of dogs — a shaman sixty years in the Barrens who has been dreaming about this exact object for weeks, and is entirely unsurprised to see them. She holds it briefly; her dogs will not settle. Then the verdict:

> *Only a dragon is wise enough to destroy it.*

⚠ **With a warning attached: a dragon may be tempted to keep it instead.**

The nearest available dragon runs an investment company from an eco-tower on the Tacoma waterfront. No guards. A lush lobby with a waterfall on the third floor. A receptionist who nearly faints when they say his name. And above all that, three floors converted into two thousand square metres of **desert** — a Mojave in the sky, dry and hot and reeking of camphor, with a twenty-metre western dragon in it.

⚠ He agrees to destroy the idol. He will not touch it — he lifts it with a spell and stares at it — and he is lying. ⚠⚠ When the team hesitates, he sighs about how difficult the ritual will be, leaves the room, and **seals them inside the oven.**

They wake in a charity hospital a day later with the idol gone. Outside there is a white limousine and a woman in an earth-toned headdress and mirrorshades, who will let them see what she actually is: ☆☆ **a great feathered serpent.** She explains their mistake with some precision.

> *"Geyswain is a Dracoform — a Lesser Dragon — as opposed to my type, which humans call a Great Dragon.* ***You gave the object to the wrong Dragon.****"*

⚠ She does not ask for help. It is partly their fault, so they will assist her — and she lets them understand what other great dragons would make of what they have done.

The raid on the tower is a horror sequence and should be run as one. The building's computer has already been physically burned out; ⚠ someone else got there first. Spirits and elementals careen around the upper floors, more interested in tearing at each other than at anyone else. In the basement, guards lie where they killed one another, a shift supervisor attacks bare-handed and insane, and ⚠⚠⚠ **in the computer room a technician is calmly eating his colleagues.**

The corruption is no longer inside an object. It is inside a building.

⚠⚠ **And then they lose.** The killer walks out with the idol and goes home, because he is an **accredited Associate Ambassador of Tír Tairngire with full diplomatic immunity.** ☆

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The best outcome available is that the thing gets destroyed before he reaches it — and if they fail, the morning news reports an unidentified, unusually large feathered serpent found dead in the ruins.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠ **Whatever the idol took.** Attributes, magic, a white streak in the hair, a tic, animals that will not come near them any more.
- ☆ **A wizards' fellowship**, if they did not shoot it — fond of them, genuinely useful, and entirely non-combatant.
- **A Lone Star captain** who becomes either a contact or a permanent enemy, decided entirely by how many of his troopers they hurt while innocent.
- ☆☆ **A great dragon who used them and knows it**, and who may never appear again.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And a diplomat who murdered their employer in front of them and cannot be touched.** ☆ Second time in six episodes that Tír Tairngire has reached into Seattle and taken what it wanted. **Let them notice.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **"Brotherhood moves uptown"** — the Universal Brotherhood is opening awareness centres downtown and in Tacoma by summer, and is accused of fronting anti-establishment sentiment	**2.11 Missing Blood**, then **Season 3.** ☆ Second UB item in five episodes, both buried in newsprint
☆ **A simstar rivalry names Euphoria** in the entertainment column	**2.9 Queen Euphoria** — four episodes later, that name is the job
⚠⚠ **An accredited Tír ambassador killing for a hidden buyer back home**	**Season 4** — 1.6's lesson again, now with a face and a diplomatic passport
☆☆ **Arleesh, if she survived**	Any season; a great dragon holding an obligation ledger with their names in it
☆☆☆ **The idol, and the fact that nobody ever explains it**	**4.6** — see the crossover box

> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE BEST-DOCUMENTED DESIGN LINK IN THE KB, AND IT IS FASA'S OWN WORDS.**
>
> From the *Running Harlequin* essay in the *Harlequin* campaign book:
>
> > *"FASA has already done something similar in **Bottled Demon**, a previous Shadowrun adventure. The 'bottle' and its effects are described in the adventure, but the **true nature of the object is never revealed. The reason for the secrecy is the same in both adventures.** Future game products will be based on hidden elements of Harlequin and on the true nature of the bottle."*
>
> ☆☆☆ **The idol and the immortal-elf feud were deliberately planted as two halves of one longer story.** That is precisely why this episode sits at 2.5, between Harlequin chapters 3 and 4.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **So: never explain the bottle. Not now, not in Season 4, not ever.** What the players get is a description and a silence — an object whose magical structure is *far larger than the object itself*, and whose barrier is **turned inward**, working to keep something in.
>
> ☆☆ **What it is for is the rhyme.** In **4.6** they will be told what the Enemy is, by someone who has been lying to them for four seasons. A table that has run *Bottled Demon* will go quiet at that moment and look at each other. **You will not have to say anything, and you should not.**

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> ⚠⚠ **The Tír thread carries the rest of the load.** A hidden buyer inside Tír Tairngire sent an accredited ambassador to acquire an artifact that bottles something, and had scholars murdered along the way. That is the same government the team brushed against in 1.6, and it is Season 4's subject.

> ⚠ **DO NOT merge this idol with the Aztec blood-idol from 1.5.** They rhyme on purpose — two artifacts, two silences — and they are not the same thing, not from the same tradition, and not made by the same hands. Collapsing them into one costs you both threads.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

The Tír, for the second time. In 1.6 the team learned that Tír Tairngire runs assets inside Seattle, and quietly landed on a list for interfering. Here an accredited Tír diplomat murders their employer in front of them and leaves legally with the prize.

☆ If they went hunting for the hidden buyer in 1.6 and got nowhere, this is where the shape starts to show: **not a country doing business — a court acquiring things.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Let someone use the idol.** It functions as a power focus with no bonding and no Karma cost, and the book's own note is *"let them; they're digging their own graves."* **The corruption subsystem is the best cursed-artifact framework in the KB**, and it only works if a player character is inside it. Track the attribute losses. Give out the cosmetic effects. When their Magic falls below half its rating they will not let anyone take it away — and **that is a player problem, not a GM ruling.**
- ☆☆ **The wizards' fellowship is not an encounter to be won.** Signal that they are amateurs: bad footwork, a shaking gun, somebody shouting the dead man's name. A table that guns them down should feel it.
- ⚠⚠ **Keep Lone Star sweating them, not killing them.** The module says it plainly — *make them sweat, don't make them dead*. The heat is the texture of the middle act, not a threat to resolve.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **The ending is a loss and you should not rescue it.** A man with diplomatic immunity takes the prize and flies home. **Let the players be angry** — that anger is the correct emotional groundwork for Season 4.
- ☆ **Never let anyone identify the idol.** Not with a spell, not with a Knowledge test, not through a contact, not in the debrief. **The silence is the content.**

2.6 · Under the Influence — bottle episode

SOURCE

📕 ***Missions*** (FASA), adventure 1 of 4. SR2, using *The Shadowrun Companion*'s alternate-campaign rules. Written for 2058 — ☆ **but this one retro-fits to 2053 completely untouched.** Nothing in it depends on Dunkelzahn's will or any later event; it needs only Renraku, Lone Star and a street gang.

☆☆☆ **THE PLAYERS ARE NOT SHADOWRUNNERS THIS EPISODE. THEY ARE LONE STAR DETECTIVES.**

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⚠ Designed for four to six players. If the table flatly refuses the frame, the module supplies the conversion — see the last running note.

> ✎ **BUILDING THE COPS — this takes twenty minutes at the top of the session and it is the whole point.**

> ⚠⚠ **The chrome ceiling is the constraint that defines the frame.** *"Lone Star regulations prohibit Star personnel from possessing cyberware that causes more than **3 points of Essence loss**."* And they are limited to **alpha-grade and ordinary cyberware**, because a cop's salary will not stretch to beta or delta. Cybered eyes, ears and smartlinks are the common items.
>
> ☆☆ **Note the inversion, because it is delicious: the lawful team is the *less* chromed one — and the enemy in this very adventure is built out of exactly the beta-grade excess the player characters are forbidden.**
>
> **The rest of the frame:** most characters come from the Division of Investigation, with one or two mages on loan from Paranormal Investigation. Use the metahuman priority — the undercover divisions carry more metahumans than the rest of the Star. Everyone needs Street Etiquette *and* internal Lone Star Etiquette, plus at least one contact on the street. Standard issue is **one handgun of any size**, a DocWagon Platinum contract, and comms. Salary supports a **Middle** lifestyle. ⚠ A character who wants a family takes the **Dependent** flaw.
>
> ⚠⚠ And: *"each player character's fingerprints, retinal patterns, DNA samples, psychological profile and personal history are registered in the Lone Star databanks."*
>
> ☆ The book suggests handing out some Good Karma, because players will find these characters *"somewhat less powerful than the characters they usually play."*
>
> ⚠⚠ **AND THAT SENTENCE IS THE ONLY KARMA GUIDANCE IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR THIS ADVENTURE**, ☆ so this document supplies a table rather than leaving you to improvise mid-session.
>
> ☆ ✎ **USE THIS:** surviving **1** · closing the case **1** · ☆☆ **making the arrest rather than the kill 1** · ⚠ **staying inside the board-of-inquiry line 1** — ☆☆☆ **and one extra to every player, as the book asks, for playing under the chrome ceiling.** ⚠ **Replace it the moment the printed table is available.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **Two rules that are the actual difference:** cops are held to a higher standard of conduct and answer to a board of inquiry — and **cops do not get to turn down assignments they dislike.**

WHAT HAPPENS

The mindset comes first, and the book states it better than a summary can. Lone Star officers view shadowrunners as their biggest problem, simply because runners operate outside the law. ☆☆ *"On another level, most cops are frustrated because they realize that the real lawbreakers — the megacorps — are just too big and politically connected for them to touch. Therefore, they lean hard on the megacorps' 'hired help' — shadowrunners."*

☆☆☆ **That is the thematic payload of the whole episode.** The players spend a session as the people who have been hunting them all campaign, and discover that the cops' actual problem is identical to their own.

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The case is a gang called the Futuremen — heavily cybered, striking with almost military precision, achieving their objective and vanishing. A dozen hits in two months, from smash-and-grab to a bloody raid on an Ares warehouse. ⚠ No officer and no computer has found a pattern in the targets.

⚠⚠⚠ **What is actually happening is that they are a Renraku experiment.** An Amazonian expatriate runs an illegal cyberclinic beneath a music store, and during surgery he and his staff implant *"a little something extra"* — **a behaviour-control device triggered by voice commands over a subdermal radio**, reinforced with heavy simsense conditioning during recovery. The result is *"a 'gang' of heavily cybered individuals who could be gathered together at a moment's notice, obey commands perfectly, and disperse after achieving their objective* ***with no recollection of what they had done or who they had done it with****."*

☆ The first operation was a field test. So were all the others — ⚠ except that every target happened to belong to one of Renraku's rivals. Renraku regards harm done to the competition as a bonus, and because no single corporation has been hit more than twice, everybody reads it as random gang violence.

The hook is that a Lone Star undercover officer went into that clinic and came out conditioned, and his report is three days overdue.

The briefing is from a captain who *"always looks unhappy, but today he looks even more unhappy than usual,"* and who ☆ motions everyone to sit down **even though there are only two chairs in the office and he is in one of them.** He is unusually candid about the politics: the media are chewing the Chief out; the best case is that the missing officer is about to break the case and cannot risk contact. ⚠ *"If he's dead, we can add 'COP KILLERS STRIKE AGAIN' to every front-page headline about the Futuremen from now on. So do whatever you have to — but find him and keep his cover secure if it's not already blown."*

The first obstacle is not danger, it is procedure, and that is the frame working. His hotel is a dive — *"the name sounds respectable, but judging from the outside of the place, Solomon would have been better off having his arms surgically replaced"* — and his room is knee-deep in laundry, with a full but not yet stinking bin, which dates his absence to about a day. ⚠ Knocking gets nothing. Breaking in draws neighbours. **They cannot be arrested, but attention could destroy weeks of undercover work**, and flashing a badge raises exactly the questions they are trying to avoid. Bribing the desk clerk starts at two hundred and fifty nuyen.

☆☆☆ **Then he comes home, and the best scene in the adventure is a conversation with a man being remote-controlled in real time.** He trails them discreetly until he works out they are Star, then introduces himself. He draws his gun *"as if expecting trouble, but will not fire unless attacked,"* and stays defensive until somebody mentions **the Kansas City Chiefs**, which is the recognition code.

His account of where he has been is entirely plausible. ⚠ And it is full of small wrong things. The book's prologue shows the same man from inside his own conditioning — a spotlight, a featureless floor, bat-shaped things with claws, and a voice barking a command word so that a gun appears in his hand and he fires. His mind keeps snagging on details that do not fit: *"It looked like his standard-issue sidearm.* ***But I wasn't packing a Thunder… I was undercover. I had a Browning. Why can't I remember having a gun?****"* And, counting rounds: *"Nine?* ***Why not seven?****"*

☆ The doctor running him wears *"an oddly old-fashioned mechanical wristwatch for a man who lived on the cutting edge."*

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
The clinic sits under a music shop, flanked by a cheap electronics store and a café, all three apparently on the verge of going under, all three renovated, ⚠ and all three Renraku fronts opening into the same underground complex — which is how the corporation moves equipment and staff in without anyone noticing.

⚠⚠ Below is a research facility with an **observation and command post**, where staff monitor each "patient" through their daily lives looking for lapses, and where a radio operator issues the gang its orders while tactical specialists watch through drones. A dozen guards and a security mage are on duty, ☆ **all in street clothes so they do not stand out if they are ever seen from above.**

☆☆ **The mage's routine is a clean, reusable pattern:** ten minutes patrolling astrally, twenty minutes resting, and a Force 3 watcher spirit in each of the three shopfronts that alerts her **whenever an outsider walks in** — at which point she assenses the visitor, and stays astral to observe anyone whose aura looks unusual.

⚠⚠ **And every entrance has a cyberware scanner, used on each new patient — so the doctor can decide whether this one is usable.** ☆ Which means walking in as a customer is both a viable approach and a trap.

☆ **The Matrix host has a nice touch:** the music shop's sales and accounting programs wear **Maria Mercurial T-shirts.**

☆☆☆ **Then the ambush, and the read-aloud earns its ending:**

> *"As you turn a garbage-strewn corner, you hear footsteps from the far end of the alleyway — and then more footsteps, and more, and still more from behind you. Either Tanner's contact has a badly split personality or you've walked into an ambush. Tanner seems to realize it too — **he's drawing his Browning. Problem is, he's pointing it at YOU.**"*

☆☆ **And here the module converts mind control from flavour into a tactical puzzle.** The conditioned gangers have *"a very limited command set and are incapable of devising and executing complex plans"* — this simple ambush is the outer limit of their tactics and took real time to arrange. Their available reactions are **moving, attacking, waiting and retreating**, and nothing else.

☆☆☆ **Which means: *"If the characters set up a counter-ambush, feint or other trick, the Futuremen will probably walk right into it."*** There is also a deliberate **controller lag** — the unwired technicians issuing the orders cannot react as fast as wired gangers would.

☆ **And the players get to do something no shadowrunner can: call for backup.** Requested, a twelve-man Fast Response Team arrives in a Citymaster; a Paranormal Investigations combat mage can be there astrally within a couple of turns with a pair of Force 4 earth elementals. ⚠⚠ **Unrequested is the sting** — two patrol officers turn up on their own after the first automatic fire, **and they do not know these people are undercover Star.** They may treat them as dangerous suspects, and they will call in the Fast Response Team anyway.

The arrest is the last scene, and it has a real dilemma in it. *"You secretly hope he's dumb enough to resist arrest."* ⚠ The team will want the doctor dead, and they need him alive to reach whoever is above him.

⚠⚠⚠ **And then the ending, which is the point of the whole episode.** Best case they take the clinic before it can be evacuated, arrest everyone, gather a convincing case, and may even earn a commendation.

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> *"However, the legal battle will drag on for months. Cuca and Powell may eventually be convicted, but **Renraku's high-powered lawyers will succeed in plausibly denying any corporate knowledge or endorsement of 'the actions of two renegade employees.'** Renraku press releases will describe them as **'misguided madmen whose actions are anathema to the enlightened policies of the Renraku corporate family,'** and the whole brouhaha will be quietly swept under the rug."*

⚠ And if they arrive too late: the gang's activity stops, the victims get the unwanted implants removed, and ☆☆ **the project lies dormant until Renraku quietly reopens it in another city.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **The knowledge that they were right about the Star and wrong about it at the same time.** The cops are not stupid and not all corrupt; they are outgunned by the same people the runners are, and they know it.
- **A commendation, possibly**, and a conviction that changes nothing.
- ⚠⚠ **The corporate voice, in its own words.** *Misguided madmen whose actions are anathema to the enlightened policies of the Renraku corporate family.* ☆ They will hear that register again.
- ☆ **A rescued officer** with someone else's hardware in his skull and a fortnight of his life he cannot account for.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Renraku running illegal human experimentation in Seattle and walking away clean**	**Seasons 6–7.** ⚠ Third Renraku item in six episodes — the cyberzombie in 1.2, three unexplained fire elementals in 1.5's newsnet, and now this
☆☆ **The project reopens in another city**	Anywhere you like; ☆ an excellent reason for the same thing to surface in Season 3 or 6
The corporate denial, verbatim	**6.x** — the exact tone Renraku will use when a hundred thousand people are sealed inside a building
☆ **Lone Star seen from the inside**	The Star relationship for the rest of the campaign
Maria Mercurial on the Matrix icons	A quiet callback to 2.1

CROSSOVER — none, and none should be added. This is a bottle episode; its value is structural, not metaplot. ☆ The one thing it does contribute to the long game is **Renraku's institutional character** — a corporation that experiments on people, gets caught, sacrifices two employees, issues a statement about enlightened policies, and moves the programme somewhere else. **Season 7's antagonist grows out of exactly that culture**, and the players will have met it here without a single spooky element attached.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **Lone Star, and the timing is deliberate.** In **1.9** the Star hunted them across the city for a murder they did not commit, then recalled the warrants without an apology. In **2.5** a Lone Star captain's raid got their employer killed and left them holding a cursed artifact. **And now they are the Star** — underfunded, under-chromed, leaned on by the media, and unable to touch the corporation actually responsible.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐ Run this immediately after *Bottled Demon*, exactly as the season map says. The whiplash is the content.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Build the cops properly. Do not just re-skin the runners.** The three-Essence ceiling, the single issue handgun, the middle lifestyle, the registered DNA and the fact that they cannot refuse the job — **that list is the episode.** Twenty minutes of character creation buys the entire tonal effect.
- ⭐⭐ **Play the glitches before the ambush.** Give them three or four small wrongnesses in the officer's story — a weapon he should not have had, a number that does not match, an hour he cannot place. **A table that works it out before the alley gets the best version of this adventure.**
- ⭐ **Let the counter-ambush work.** Mind-controlled opponents with a four-verb command set walking into a feint is the module's own promise, and it rewards exactly the kind of planning these players do instinctively as runners.
- ⚠⚠ **Do not forget the unrequested backup.** Two uniforms arriving who do not know who they are is the frame's sharpest joke and its most dangerous moment.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not rescue the ending.** Renraku walks. Two employees take the fall, the press release is smug, and the file closes. **Let the players sit in the exact frustration the briefing described** — it is the reason the episode exists, and it is why some cops become runners.
- ⭐ **If the table refuses the frame entirely:** Lone Star hires outside investigators because its own people cannot crack the case, and pays in **Registered Equipment, six months of DocWagon Platinum, SINs, and fake IDs manufactured by Lone Star itself.** ⚠ It works — but you lose the chrome ceiling, and the chrome ceiling is the episode.

2.7 · Dark Angel

SOURCE

📕 ***Dark Angel*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition. *Sprawl Sites*, *The Grimoire*, the *Street Samurai Catalog* and the *Seattle Sourcebook*'s yakuza pages all help.

⭐ **Written for 2054**, which is exactly where late Season Two sits — no re-dating needed. ⚠ Ignore the date printed on the player handout; FASA reused a newsnet template and it carries the wrong year.

⚠⚠⚠ **This adventure cannot be shot through, and that is its entire design.** The season map is blunt about it: *a yakuza-politics resolution is required.*

WHAT HAPPENS

A dead rock star is not dead.

Dark Angel is an elven street rocker and a Seattle legend. Years ago his brother wanted a promotion into Mitsuhama's hermetic research division, and the local oyabun — **Kat Akmura** — named her price: a traditional rite of fealty and indenture, binding the whole household. ⚠⚠ Angel refused. Then he insulted her. *"I never forget that."*

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He went to the streets instead, sang what he liked, turned down every recording deal with yakuza money in it, and took up with a small-time talismonger called **Lili Ice**.

⚠⚠⚠ **Akmura waited years, and then took everything at once.** She had him kidnapped and staged his death as a chip-induced suicide, with a burned substitute corpse recovered from a notorious BTL den. She is forcing the living prisoner to record new music and to sign his entire catalogue over to a predatory promoter, who kicks a share back to her. And ⚠ **the man who planned and executed the kidnapping was Angel's own brother**, because destroying Jim was the price of yakuza approval for his career.

He is alive on her floating headquarters, while she enjoys watching a proud elf become, in her words, *"the most popular dead singer in the history of music."*

☆☆ **And the team is hired on a false premise by a woman who has been lied to about her partner twice over.** Lili believes he is dead, believes he sold out, and believes he was unfaithful — none of which is true. She hires the runners to prove the promoter murdered him, so the will can be voided and the copyrights recovered. **Every single thing she tells them at the meet is wrong, and she is not lying.**

The investigation peels back in layers.

The promoter turns out to be a pawn who cannot be frightened into surrendering the rights, because she is far more afraid of the yakuza than of the runners. ☆ Two things in her office matter: she is wearing **a platinum ring that Lili bought for Angel**, and her studio's accounts show millions of nuyen flowing to a Mr. Crull.

A Lone Star lieutenant at the precinct that handled the death — crooked but professional, and with no love for the yakuza — will talk for about five thousand nuyen, ☆ provided the offer is made politely enough to be framed as a donation to the Police Widows' Fund. ⚠ **Fumble that etiquette and he arrests them for attempted bribery.** What he knows is that forensics privately identified the burned corpse as **a recently murdered squatter**, killed and dressed to look like Angel, and that the cover-up came from Mitsuhama.

☆ The chip den where the body was found has become **a pilgrimage site** — chipheads and cultists, some of whom have had surgery to look like the dead man.

And Angel's brother, a thaumaturgical analyst who owes his glamorous career to the yakuza, ⚠ **pays roughly a third of his income into a foreign bank account.** Tracing who owns that account produces the name that closes the case.

⚠⚠ **Meanwhile the band suspects the team's employer.** Angel's own group refuse to believe the suicide and have decided **Lili** killed him — one of them has a secret obsession with Angel and leads the faction. So the runners are working for a woman the victim's closest friends want dead, on a theory that is wrong, against a promoter who is innocent of the murder.

☆☆☆ **THEN THE MODULE REVEALS ITS ACTUAL SUBJECT, AND IT IS NOT THE MYSTERY.**

Once they know Akmura has him, the obvious plan is to kill her. **They cannot.** Killing an oyabun without **clan sanction** brands them oath-breakers: the senior oyabun is then obliged to avenge her, he looses his own ninja to hunt them indefinitely, and oyabuns elsewhere in the world will commission hits on them for the rest of their lives.

There are exactly two ways to earn sanction.

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⭐ **The traditionalist senior oyabun** keeps a feudal-Japanese country estate and finds Akmura's corporate collusion distasteful. Reached through a fixer and approached correctly — the bow, the surrendered weapons — he will grant permission **on one condition: a single clean hit, with no drawn-out street war.** ⭐⭐ He keeps his word, he keeps his people leashed, and he will warn them that Akmura's bodyguards are Oni-do.

⚠⚠ **Or Akmura's own uneasy ally**, a younger and greedier boss who runs a sensory-overload pleasure palace, and whose calculation is purely self-interested: if the runners look likely to lose he would rather help Akmura and hold the leverage; if they look likely to win he would rather be on the winning side and inherit her rackets. ⚠ He may test them, ambush them, or sell them out if they look weak.

⭐ **Beating the brother cleanly first materially improves that negotiation** — as does making a proper appointment through a fixer rather than turning up.

⭐⭐ **The Oni-do are the muscle, and they are the grimmest invention in the module.** *The Way of the Goblin* is an orphan society that collects goblinised ork and troll children nobody wants — there is a woman in the Ginza whose job is gathering unwanted trog kids — and raises them from birth as elite assassins with no outside interests, friends or loyalties. *"They live for their duty alone."* They are run by wizboys, they breed trolls for the purpose, they care nothing for honour or cause, and **the yakuza are their largest customer.** ⚠ Their one weakness is a severe **silver** allergy.

The climax is a rescue from a ship, and then a killing that is legal by the only law that matters here.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐ **A man out of a cell, and a woman who has to be told that everything she believed about him was manufactured.** ⚠ Play that scene. It is the point of the adventure.
- **Sanction, and the obligation attached to it.** A senior oyabun who granted them permission now has an opinion about them, and expects the terms to be honoured.
- ⚠⚠ **Or a global contract on their heads**, if they killed her without permission.
- ⭐ **The Oni-do as a known quantity** — including what they are made from, which is worse than what they can do.
- **Lone Star's Precinct 249**, and one lieutenant who takes money but does not lie.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐ **The clan-sanction protocol**	Every future yakuza contact; ⭐ the players now know the shadows have a legal system
⭐ **The Oni-do**	Reusable elite muscle, and a permanent moral bruise
⚠⚠ **Knight Errant wins an advertising award at Cannes** for commercials shot *during an actual security operation*, using real automatic-weapons and berserk-shaman combat footage	Knight Errant / Ares; ⭐ they will matter more later, and this is who they are
⭐ **Torpedo sharks kill a parazoologist studying their feeding frenzy**	⚠ The same creatures are in the water around Akmura's ship. **The handout is a warning nobody reads**
A troll-rights group running a recruitment drive	⭐ Deliberately printed alongside the Oni-do: troll children organising for their rights, and troll children raised as assassins, in the same newspaper

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Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

CROSSOVER — no canon content, and one free gift.

⚠ Nothing in *Dark Angel* is in the crossover register, and nothing should be added to it. The yakuza, the Oni-do and the Crull brothers are pure Sixth World.

✎ THE ALBUM IS CALLED *EARTH DAWN*, AND THAT IS AN ACCIDENT YOU CAN USE.

Both endings put the same title on the player handout. If the team wins, Angel returns and announces a new album, ***Earth Dawn*** — *"What lies in the past is over."* If they fail, the studio releases ***Earth Dawn*** as its second posthumous cash-in, under the headline *"Even death can't make you immortal."*

⚠ **This is FASA naming a fictional album after their other game, and it is not canon in this campaign's register.** But in a two-game campaign it is free money: **a rock album called *Earth Dawn*, with that tagline, printed on a newspaper the players are handed.**

☆☆ **Use it exactly like everything else in this document — plant, do not reveal.** Do not have anyone remark on the title. Do not explain it. Let it be a name on a handout that a player might one day, in another campaign in another age of the world, remember reading.

⚠ And if nobody ever notices, nothing is lost. That is the standard for all of it.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **The yakuza etiquette from 1.6, and this is the first time the campaign has demanded a *learned social skill* rather than a fact.**

In *Elven Fire* the team sat through tea at a Whispering Nights house: weapons left at the door, shoes off, business only after the tea, and the specific trap that assensing the oyabun's blind daughter was a serious insult. **That is precisely the competence this module requires.** A team that absorbed it approaches the senior oyabun properly — fixer-brokered appointment, correct bow, weapons surrendered — and gets sanction. A team that treats him like a Johnson gets nothing, and then has to try the treacherous one instead.

☆ Nobody needs to point the connection out. The players who remember will simply do it right.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Establish early that force will not work, and be honest about the consequence.** The moment they start planning a hit, let a contact tell them plainly what happens to people who kill an oyabun freelance. **This is not a railroad — it is the setting having rules.**
- ☆☆ **Their employer is wrong about everything and is not lying.** Lili believes he is dead, that he sold out, and that he betrayed her. Play her grief as real, because it is, and let the players be the ones who eventually have to correct it.
- ☆ **Let the band accuse her.** A faction of the victim's closest friends who want the team's own employer dead is excellent pressure and costs nothing.
- ☆ **Deal with the brother before approaching the bosses.** It is mechanically rewarded, and it is also the right dramatic order — the family betrayal is a smaller, more personal reveal than the political one.

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- ⚠ **Silver against the Oni-do**, and let a Knowledge test find it. ☆ But do not let the players walk away thinking they were monsters. **They were unwanted children, collected and raised for this.** The troll-rights notice in the same newspaper is the module's own comment.

2.8 · Harlequin, chapter 4 — LOVES

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305), mini-adventure 4 of 8. ⚠ Requires ***The Grimoire***. Thread rules at **1.4**; the previous beat was **2.3**.

☆☆ **Karma:** surviving **1** · the correct passcode against Dassurn **1** · running Johnson's program **1** · ☆☆ **delivering the sealed envelope 2** · a passcode copy to Ehran's suite **1** · a passcode copy to Johnson **1** · ⚠⚠ **the wrong passcode −2** · ⚠ **tampering with the sealed envelope −1.**

☆ Pay is likewise adjusted: less for failing to get the passcodes, less for a wrong passcode that left wreckage, ⚠ **and less for breaking the wax seal in any way.** Bonuses for handing over the client list, and for returning Johnson's program unprompted rather than waiting to be asked.

WHAT HAPPENS

The target this time is Ehran's own policlub, and the irony is the point. Bright financial-software designers who work at Sylvan Information — the publisher the team robbed in **1.4** — are also members of the **Young Elven Technologists**, and they have been leaving **imperceptible back doors** in the packages Sylvan sells. Once a client installs one, the policlub can siphon funds out of it whenever it likes.

☆☆☆ **And note how Harlequin found out:** *"Harlequin has become aware of all this through **other shadowruns made against Ehran (after all, the player characters are NOT the only act in town)**."* ⚠ **The team is one crew among several.** That single parenthesis is worth more to the campaign than most reveals — they are not special, they are *convenient*.

The brief is to hoist Ehran with his own petard. The book says so in as many words, and adds, of the policlub: *"Don't feel too sorry for them. They've had it coming for awhile."*

The meet is at their own party, in a Barrens building with *Fire Station 118* still cut into the cornerstone. The fixer who drives them in has stainless steel razor-teeth, ☆ *"rumored to be a 'gift' from a dissatisfied oyabun with no tolerance for failure. Her fingers are, however, all present and accounted for. (**At least they seem to be her fingers…**)"*

☆☆ **Mr. Johnson is described more carefully than any Johnson so far**, which is itself a signal: a smooth, cultured voice with a distinctive elven accent, *"almost the antithesis of the person to whom it belongs."* He is an elf who could pass for a misshapen human or a good-looking ork — thin pink scars criss-crossing his scalp *"like roads on a dark map,"* a craggy face that could have been hewn from quartz, and a mouth slightly too small to contain a stunning set of **gold-capped teeth.**

The job has three parts. Take two copies of the policlub's back-door passcode datastore. Deliver one copy — ☆☆ **and a sealed missive** — to Ehran the Scribe's private suite upstairs. And run the Matrix against a securities firm, using a passcode to slip the gate, reach the Liquidations subprocessor, and execute a program the fixer is carrying.

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⚠⚠ **It must happen tomorrow night**, because the firm audits its branches on Monday and the policlub will have no time to cover itself.

⚠⚠⚠ **And there is one instruction the runners are forbidden to disobey:**

> *"Under no circumstance should you deviate from this plan or attempt any facet of this run from beyond these walls… **For reasons best kept secret, ALL PATHS MUST LEAD DIRECTLY TO THE YOUNG ELVEN TECHNOLOGISTS' DOORSTEP … especially if things sour.**"*

☆☆☆ **Then the briefing is interrupted by a man insisting he exists.** Three trolls with light machine guns converge on the door, and a shrill voice cuts through the party: *"I tell ya, I am Lee Gorbin!"* To get inside, Mr. Johnson had a policlub member quietly delayed and **took his place**. The real one has now turned up.

☆☆ *"Characters who investigate may be surprised to discover that the protesting Elf is the **twin** of their Mr. Johnson."*

⚠ And by the time anyone looks back, *"their Mr. Johnson has vanished… **He's just GONE.**"*

☆☆☆ **The book then declines to explain, in print, on purpose:**

> *"Who is Mr. Johnson, the imposter Lee Gorbin? Well, it might be Harlequin come to meet the runners who've been doing his dirty work, but then again, it might not. **WE'RE NOT SAYING.**"*

The party itself is worth playing at length. Everything is scanned at the door. Circulating produces overheard fragments — including ⚠⚠ *"I'm telling ya, **Lee**, a lot of those APN got geeked and are blaming us for it"* (the name will mean something later), and ☆ somebody offering a bootleg chip of the night Maria Mercurial played Underworld 93.

☆☆ **The policlub is recruiting, and it especially wants deckers.** An attractive recruiter works any decker who looks the part, and the book is unsentimental about the method: *"The lonely and the desperate easily fall prey to policlubs when a recruiter turns on the charm. Getting 'close' to a prospective tyro is their business. **Getting AWAY from the recruiter… is extremely difficult.**"* Push the conversation and she volunteers the thing the team actually needs: their chairman is **Ehran the Scribe**, he writes all their literature, ☆☆ **he keeps a private suite upstairs, and he is coming to the youth meeting on Saturday.**

☆☆ **And one guest is flagged for later.** A peripheral member of Ehran's entourage — silver-haired, elegant, an ornamental sword across his back, *"a whiny, arrogant, racist Elf"* who considers Ehran the only person alive who meets his standards, and who *"wears his boredom and bigotry like a badge."* ☆☆☆ **The book's own instruction: point him out, because they will meet him again in chapter 5.**

The building is a beautifully built infiltration. The grounds are immaculate, because the policlub is proud of the place — ⚠ but the four corner cameras have been vandalised and no longer work, which a Perception test spots from the street. ☆☆ Astrally, the hall is wide open *except* for the administrative offices and Ehran's suite: *"Ehran the Scribe is not so blind as to ignore the spiritual protection of his precious policlub."* ⚠⚠ And the reason it is survivable at all: *"**The player characters can count their lucky stars that Ehran is still out of town when the shadowrun takes place.**"*

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⭐⭐⭐ **The solarium is the set piece.** Stepping into it is *"like stepping into a dream-park"* — trees, shrubbery and grass for decor, a fifteen-metre skylight with hydroponic lighting built into its frame to fake sunlight, and a performer on a small stage whose every muscle contraction sounds a note or flashes a light, while a dozen or two barefoot dancers move to him.

⚠⚠ **And it costs something to be in.** On leaving, a character tests Willpower against a target number **equal to the number of minutes they spent inside** — failure means disorientation, ringing ears and deafness for several minutes. ⭐ **The longer they work the party, the worse they come out of it.**

⭐⭐ **Fighting in there is genuinely three-dimensional.** Two catwalks six metres up, half-hidden in branches, with guards on them. Firing through a catwalk is full cover; firing through its floor is blind fire. ⚠⚠ **And anyone shooting upward risks the skylight** — it shatters, rains slivers on everyone below, and then leaves a two-metre radius of broken glass that counts as difficult ground and cuts anyone crossing it. The second-floor catwalks are wood and rope: four turns with a sharp knife to cut one, a test not to fall six metres, and **if both ropes go from the same side the whole catwalk swings down.**

⚠ After eleven at night, two of Ehran's own people are in the upstairs apartments — a bodyguard and a combat mage. *"They have, as always, arrived in advance of their employer."*

⭐ **Ehran's suite is behind a Force 10 ward worked into the wall decor**, a maglock he alone holds the key to, and a panic button. Inside it is spartan: a desk, two terminals, a datastore, and a bookshelf. ⭐⭐ *"Most of the books on the bookshelf were written by Ehran (under his own name and under a number of **pseudonyms**)."*

⭐ **The basement is where the module's sense of humour lives.** The security lounge sits next to the camera room, and *"chances are good that the characters won't be spotted if they wander into a security camera's field **because the guards are IN HERE — it's hard to get good help these days**."* And the computer room is where the best deckers in the city end up after joining: forty workstations, the CPU in a soundproofed glass box, and ⚠⚠ **Ehran quietly putting them to work writing software for Sylvan Information and other companies he controls.**

⚠ On the opposition: *"These guys make their living doing just this sort of thing… **They are NOT monsters squatting in a dungeon room waiting for a band of adventurers to swagger in and end their miserable existences.**"*

In the Matrix, two files matter. One is Ehran's portable datastore, holding every back-door utility his deckers wrote. The other is a restricted, black-iced list of Sylvan's clients — names, addresses, network locations and which packages they bought. ⭐⭐⭐ **Cross-reference the two and you can match each back door to its purchaser, which is what decides the bank run.**

⚠ Alerts escalate mercilessly: one elven decker investigates, and if he is beaten, *"smile and give the decker another five minutes before **two more** Elf deckers enter the system. **Keep doubling the number** every five minutes until something gives."*

⭐ **At the bank there are three outcomes.** With both files, the correct passcode opens *"a tiny hole in the alphanumeric wall… not by destroying the wall, but by forcing the data to flow around it."* With only the passcodes and no client list, it is a **one-in-six guess** — and a wrong one produces the module's best line: *"You feel like a two-bit criminal who went out to buy a maglock passkey and came back with a **chainsaw**."* With neither, it is an honest deck run, which the book openly prefers.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐⭐ **And the program itself reads like a confession.** *"The code is definitely **Elven**, the syntax like something out of a textbook, but a monster."* It mimics a legitimate cash-out complete with retinal and cellular confirmation from phantom laboratories — then empties the branch reservoir, the cash reserves, the credit line, and reaches across the Matrix to the head office *"for a little mother's milk,"* until head office severs *"the cybernetic umbilical connecting them with their money-hungry offspring."*

> *"Somebody is extremely rich tonight, but you wouldn't want to trade places with him for all the money in his bank account right now."*

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN THE WALL COMES IN.**

At the exact moment the decker starts his run, **the Association Para-Nobilis blow a four-by-three-metre hole through the south wall** and begin sweeping the ground floor — *"looking for survivors. The occasional burst of gunfire indicates that they've found yet another one."*

⚠⚠⚠ **Then, at a dramatic moment, the elves stop shooting at each other and notice the shadowrunners.** Everyone who ran **1.8** makes a Perception test:

> *"the cut of their clothing, the hair styling, the insignia that adorns their headbands — it all looks so familiar. Then it clicks. **These dandies are members of the Association Para-Nobilis, part of the group your shadowteam was hired to wetwork a short while back.** A cold shiver runs down your spine as you recognize one of the APN Elfies from across the room."*

⚠⚠ **Both policlubs now know their faces, and they negotiate a truce on the spot in order to kill the team together.**

The escape is a ladder of tests — reach your vehicle, or stumble and take a long-range shot, then try again at an easier number, and again, *"until he makes it to his vehicle **or dies**."* ⭐ And a lovely piece of gamemaster advice attached: *"If the characters manage to breeze through this run with nary a scratch, have it be the Elf with the biggest, baddest weapon and a weapon Specialization to boot."*

⚠ On the risk of a bloodbath, the book is unsentimental: *"If they keep shooting, so will the Elves. **If they die, they knew the risks.**"*

THE TWO REVEALS THIS CHAPTER HIDES

⭐⭐⭐ ① **The program routes the money into Ehran's own account.** A Computer test on the compiled code peels it back: a money-transfer routine; then subroutines defeating retinal and cellular verification; then the discovery that once past verification it **transforms into a revenue-service confiscation program** that strips every account connected to the system. ⚠⚠ And at the top of the ladder — it routes everything to a numbered account at a Tacoma bank. **A decker who dares the bank's customer database finds the account belongs to Ehran the Scribe.**

⭐⭐ **They did not rob a bank for Harlequin. They made it look as though Ehran embezzled it, through back doors written by his own policlub.**

⭐⭐ ② **The jester on the wax seal.** A Perception test on the sealed envelope notes first that it was closed with wax rather than a gummed flap, and then ⭐⭐⭐ **the faint impression of a laughing clown's head pressed into it.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠ And anyone who breaks that seal finds a single sheet of paper inside — which anyone who ran **2.3** will recognise as **the frontispiece torn out of the Bavarian tome.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Forty thousand each**, less whatever they cost themselves.
- ☆☆ **The Sylvan client list**, which is worth real money and is a standing hook.
- ⚠⚠ **Two policlubs as permanent enemies**, who have met, compared notes, and agreed about them. *"The one thing past experience has proven is that it's a small world out there..."*
- ☆☆☆ **A clown's head in wax**, if anyone looked.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆ **The silver-haired elf in Ehran's entourage**	**3.3 — Harlequin 5, COUNTERSTROKE.** The book explicitly says to point him out now
☆☆☆ **Ehran framed as an embezzler**	**Season 4** — one more thing done to a man the players have never met
☆☆ **The jester seal**	The signature; the rapier in 1.4 was the same gesture
Both policlubs hunting them	Any season; ☆ enemies they made by doing two jobs correctly
The passcode datastore, taken	The relay — the frontispiece goes, the codes come

> ☆☆ **CROSSOVER — one question the module refuses to answer, and you should refuse too.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Was Mr. Johnson Harlequin?** FASA printed *"it might be Harlequin... but then again, it might not. **We're not saying.**"* ☆ **Neither are you.**
>
> ☆ Note that the description does not fit him — a scarred scalp, gold-capped teeth, a face like hewn quartz, an elf who could pass for an ork. That is either a disguise, or somebody else entirely, and **there is a twin standing in the room shouting that he is the real one.** Let the players build whatever theory they like and never confirm it.
>
> ☆☆ **What matters is the seal.** Whoever that man was, the wax carried a laughing clown — the same authorial gesture as the Renaissance rapier that appeared on every terminal in **1.4**. **A player who has seen both marks now has two data points and no explanation, which is exactly the intended state.**
>
> ⚠ Identities were laid out at 1.4 and nothing new is added here. Do not restate them, and do not let Harlequin appear in person; he does not, for four more episodes.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE BIGGEST ONE IN THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR, AND IT IS SIX EPISODES OLD.**

In **1.8** the team took a wetwork contract against the Association Para-Nobilis, killed or broke its leadership, and collected six false ear tips. ⚠ Survivors saw their faces.

Here those survivors walk through a hole in the wall, recognise them across a crowded room, and stop shooting at their enemies in order to deal with the runners first. Two organisations that hate each other make peace, in the middle of a firefight, specifically about this team.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐⭐ **This is the interleaved structure doing precisely what it was built for**, and it is why the chapters must never be run back to back. Six unrelated episodes stood between the crime and the consequence. **Nobody at the table will need it explained.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Do not warn them.** The Perception test at the moment of recognition is the whole payoff. Read the passage as written and let the table do the arithmetic out loud.
- ⭐⭐ **Work the party before the job.** The recruiter, the overheard names, the arrogant elf with the sword, the sensory toll on the way out. **The intelligence they need is all in conversation**, and the building is much harder without it.
- ⚠⚠ **Enforce the "all paths lead to their doorstep" instruction, and let the players resent it.** It is a suspicious order, it is meant to sound suspicious, and obeying it is what makes the frame work.
- ⭐ **Offer the seal, quietly.** Do not prompt a Perception test — mention the wax, once, and see whether anybody asks. ⚠ **And if someone opens it, take the Karma and let them see a page from a book they stole in Bavaria, with no explanation whatsoever.**
- ⭐⭐ **Let a decker chase the money afterwards.** The account belongs to Ehran, the trail is dangerous, and the discovery is worth more than the fee: **they are not thieves in this story, they are witnesses being used to build a case against a man neither they nor the players have met.**

2.9 · Queen Euphoria

SOURCE

📕 ***Queen Euphoria*** (FASA #7202) — an early module, SR1/SR2-compatible, decision-tree structure, using the core rules and *Sprawl Sites*. Written for January 2050; re-date into 2054.

⚠⚠ **It must be played before the Universal Brotherhood exposé that opens Season Three.** The entire value of this adventure is that the players meet insect spirits *years before the world admits they exist*.

⭐ **And it chains directly off 2.1** — the module's own text has the fixer approach this team **because of their experience protecting a big-name star.**

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **This is two adventures with a hinge in the middle, and the hinge is a change of genre.** Part one is a caper: kidnap a celebrity, hold her three days, hand her back unharmed, get paid. Part two is a horror film about what happened to her afterwards, and the players are hired into it by the people who know they did the first job.

Part one is almost gentle. A rival food corporation wants the reclusive megasimsense star **Euphoria** to miss a run of promotional appearances for a snack product, so the team is offered twenty thousand each to take her and hold her from Thursday to Sunday. ⚠ **No harm to the lady.** They are given a keycard to a rented flat in the Redmond Barrens, stocked with dehydrated food and a change of women's clothes.

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Her building is a twenty-five-storey luxury spike with thumbprint elevators, and she is guarded by an English ex-samurai with a monofilament whip who is loyal to the studio and has no particular affection for her, plus a hermetic mage with three bound elementals. ⚠ There are three ways to take her — in the penthouse, at the door as she leaves, or on the road, where a corporate helicopter is three minutes out.

⭐⭐ **And then holding her turns out to be a comedy.** Once she realises these people are not going to hurt her, the fear evaporates and she becomes an imperious, sulking nuisance: *"I'm supposed to sleep in THAT bed? It's full of BUGS!"* The payment courier is a wage-slave in an oversized overcoat who treats a routine errand as spy melodrama, reads triple meanings into ordinary sentences and fawns over her. ⚠ Mistreat him and future work with that corporation dries up.

⚠⚠⚠ **There is exactly one wrong note in the whole of part one, and it is the best-placed foreshadow in Season Two.**

She craves the snack product she was hired to promote, and will wheedle and sulk until somebody fetches her some. ⭐⭐⭐ **And if a magician happens to be watching astrally while she eats it, they see millions of ants pouring out of her hands** — and afterwards there is a small red welt on her skin, like an insect bite.

Nothing is explained. Nobody comes to explain it. Then the caper resumes, a rival shaman who tracked her with a strand of her hair storms the flat on Sunday morning, the team relocates, collects the balance, and drops her somewhere respectable.

Part two opens with the fixer dead. He was interrogated and then killed by a firebomb, identified from dental records — a message. The studio traced the first kidnapping to this team, and now Euphoria has vanished *again*, and they are being hired by the people who know exactly what they did.

⚠⚠⚠ **Her penthouse is a slaughterhouse.** The corporate guards have been shredded and torn apart — *"you hope to God whatever did it wasn't Human."* The plastic shell of the greenhouse balcony has been holed from outside. And there is a lump of brown slime on the carpet whose smell is unmistakably the snack product.

⭐⭐⭐ **The centrepiece is a recording nobody meant to make.** She was rehearsing on a wireless sense link when they came for her, so her own studio captured the entire abduction — ⚠⚠ **and a character who puts on the headset relives it at full unfiltered intensity, from inside her body.** Her guards being butchered. The shapes rising. A man in a bar T-shirt whose face is wrong, and another man saying that he was told to take care of her, and that he will.

The trail runs three ways — a corporate host whose truck-routing module holds the address of a production facility; a downtown bar where a waiter was dragged into the sewers a month ago and later seen with *"scars all over his face"*; and an obese, over-jewelled executive who has been funding all of it and has no idea what he is buying.

What he is buying is hive secretion. A Coyote shaman went to South America on a fetish-buying run, was shot down, lost his totem in the jungle, and was drawn to a stone pyramid where astral warrior ants ate his astral body and built him a new one. ⭐ An unsummoned Queen offered him power, and a dancing figure, and *she would be his Queen*. He came back and started building her a hive in the Puyallup Barrens — and discovered that what the Workers secrete, mixed with food additives, makes a near-addictive snack. He has been selling it as *nectar of the gods* to fund the construction.

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⭐ **The studio then funds a full assault** — seventy-five thousand each, military-grade armour, whatever heavy weapons they ask for. ⚠⚠ **With two catches the players will not read carefully enough.** The armour contains concealed simsense recorders, because the studio intends to sell the raid as an entertainment. And the contract they sign assigns all dramatisation rights to the studio and forbids them from operating against it for thirty days.

The hive has two levels. Above, a dusty, barely-used food-production floor where automated trucks load drums. Below, no power, a sweet pungent reek, thin walls, ⚠ **and no ordinary insects or rats anywhere.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And the last room is the worst thing in Season Two.** Dozens of amber cocoons holding **close to a hundred people taken out of the Barrens**, all slowly being possessed into new insect spirits, all beyond saving. The shaman standing in the middle of it laughing while giant ant-shaped things manifest around him. And in the corner, one more cocoon.

⭐⭐⭐ **THERE IS NO VERSION OF THIS WHERE THEY SAVE HER, AND THE MODULE IS EXPLICIT.**

- **Open the cocoon without dealing with the Queen first** and Euphoria's body dies.
- ⭐ **Banish or destroy the Queen first** — she is vulnerable to astral combat during incubation and cannot defend herself — **and Euphoria's body survives, but her mind is long gone and the transformation has already begun.** She is alive and ruined.
- **Leave it** and the Queen emerges in about five weeks, with the other cocoons opening within one to five.

⚠ Outside, a full company of corporate security has ringed the building — there to recover the equipment, and to watch.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **Three separate fees: twenty thousand each for the kidnapping, twenty for the search, and seventy-five thousand each for the assault** — comfortably the largest payday of the season.
- ⚠⚠ **A woman they kidnapped for money, and then could not rescue.** ⭐ The campaign will not make this point for you. Let it sit.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Knowledge nobody wants.** They have seen a hive, a queen, flesh-form workers and a hundred cocooned people, ⭐ **and there is no name for any of it yet.** Every expert they ask will be wrong.
- ⚠ **A sim of themselves fighting insect spirits**, which a megacorporation owns and they signed away.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **"Universal Brotherhood announces plans for three more Barrens missions"**	**2.11**, then **Season 3.** ⚠ Third UB item on a handout — see the drumbeat below
⚠⚠ **Amber Gel was on shelves across Seattle** before it was withdrawn	Open-ended and nasty; ⭐ nobody knows how much was eaten
⚠⚠⚠ **The cocoons they did not open**	**One to five weeks.** ⭐ Whatever the team did in that room, some of those people are still becoming something
⭐⭐ **A megacorporation owns full sensory footage of insect spirits**	⚠ Two years before the exposé. **What the studio does with that recording is entirely yours**
Insect spirits themselves	**Season 3** — and the Fourth World half of it, much later

✎ THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD DRUMBEAT — four beats, none of them an adventure.

Where	What the players see
1.9 newsnet	A Brotherhood soup-kitchen building destroyed in an unexplained explosion and fire
2.5 newsnet	The Brotherhood is opening awareness centres downtown and in Tacoma, and is accused of fronting anti-establishment sentiment
2.9 newsnet *(here)*	The Brotherhood announces plans for **three more Barrens missions**
2.11	☆☆☆ The season finale, from the inside

☆☆ **Three of the four are one line of newsprint in a paper full of other news.** Do not point at any of them. **By the time the fourth arrives the players should already half-know, without being able to say why.**

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE FLAGSHIP ENTRY, AND THE PLAYERS ARE SIX THOUSAND YEARS LATE TO IT.

The insect spirits are **the invae**. Not new, and not extradimensional in the way the Sixth World will assume when it finally notices them — in the Fourth World they were the same hive shape, the same queens, the same use of people as hosts, and they were a known catastrophe. ⚠ Dead **Scytha** hides them, which is a gamemaster's secret on the Barsaive side too.

☆☆ **HOW TO PLANT IT HERE — and this is the cleanest instruction in the register: the isolation is the beat.** The runners are years ahead of the world, and **nobody believes them.** That is not a side effect; it is the content. ⚠⚠ **Do not let any NPC supply the ancient context.** No scholar, no dragon, no helpful mage with a theory.

☆ **Let exactly one old word survive** — something in the architecture of the hive, or a throwaway line from an academic about an older name people used to use. Nothing more.

☆☆☆ **A group that later plays the Fourth World and walks into the invae earns the entire thing in one moment.** That payoff is worth more than any explanation you could give them now.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **2.1 Mercurial, explicitly.** The module's own text says the fixer comes to this team because of their experience guarding a major star. **The campaign did not arrange that — FASA did**, and it is the reason the season map orders these two.

☆ **And 2.5, quietly.** Euphoria was named four episodes ago in a newsnet entertainment column about a rivalry between two simstars. **The players have read her name before they were ever offered the job.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Do not foreshadow part two during part one.** The kidnap should be funny. She should be a nightmare houseguest. The courier should be ridiculous. **The tonal drop is the design, and it only works if you commit to the comedy.**

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- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the Amber Gel vision once, casually, in the middle of the comedy, and then move on.** Ants pouring out of her hands, a welt on her skin, and the scene continues. **Do not let anyone investigate it successfully.** It is the only warning in the entire first half.
- ⚠️⚠️ **Offer the recording; do not force it.** Reliving an abduction from inside the victim at full intensity is a genuinely upsetting scene and a player should choose to do it. ⭐ Whoever does should get something for it — the shaman's exact words are in there.
- ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Present all three cocoon outcomes honestly and let them pick which failure they can live with.** ⭐ Do not invent a fourth. The adventure's whole spine is that they arrive too late for a woman they themselves delivered into the open.
- ⚠️ **Nobody believes them afterwards.** Play the debriefs, the contacts, the experts. **Everyone has a reasonable alternative explanation**, and every one of them is wrong.

2.10 · Celtic Double-Cross

SOURCE

📕 ***Celtic Double-Cross*** (FASA, SR2E). ⚠️⚠️ **Requires the *Tír na nÓg* sourcebook** — the setting is the adventure. *Grimoire II* strongly recommended.

⭐ **Written for 2054**, which is exactly where late Season Two sits. No re-dating at all.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Combat is a liability here and the module is built to make that true.** Tír customs strips heavy weapons and offensive magic on the way in, and in a stand-up fight with the state's counter-terror force the team has, in the book's own words, *"virtually no hope."*

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **Four people are running a double-cross, and the players are underneath all of them.**

A New York mayoral candidate makes a pilgrimage to elven Ireland — genealogy exhibitions, memorial parks, prime-time photo opportunities — to court the Irish-American vote and, quietly, to sign a transit deal with a Tír transport giant. ⚠️ His skeleton is that he is in bed with the Mafia, who want intelligence on that same company so they can move BTLs into the country, and who are keeping his secret in exchange for votes.

So he hires the runners as peripheral bodyguards, because his own security is compromised and he wants out-of-towners *"not contaminated"* by it. ⚠️⚠️ **What he actually wants is scapegoats.**

His elven aide is working for the Seelie Court. He tips off terrorists to hit the secret Mafia meeting, and then frames the runners as the leak, to cover himself.

⚠️ **And that aide is himself being tested.** Tír Tairngire already holds evidence linking the candidate to the Mob; they want the aide to prove his loyalty by acting against his employer. ⭐⭐ **Above all of it sits a Tír Tairngire prince playing both the aide and the runners as pieces in an inter-Tír game, and he never appears on screen at all.**

The trip in establishes the rules. The fixer offers twenty-five hundred a day for five days with full medical. ⚠️ Tír customs will take their weapons and their offensive foci; the candidate can

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arrange permits — ⭐⭐ and can waive the requirement that a foreign magician entering the country **provide a DNA sample and accept a cortex bomb.** That is the normal price of admission for a mage, and it tells the players precisely what kind of country this is.

⚠️ At the airport they are told to stay twenty to thirty metres from the candidate, observe, and never engage. They are handed wristphone alarms. ⭐⭐ **The chief of staff holds the slaving controller for those wristphones — a mild shock, and an alert to the real bodyguards.** They are wearing a leash and nobody mentions it.

On arrival, the Tír Republican Corps stand at the edge of the crowd in black berets and wraparound shades, almost entirely elven, while the mostly-human police run customs. ⚠️⚠️⚠️ Behind them, deployed only if anyone challenges the state directly, is the **Reach Fuileach** — *"the bloody body"* — magical armour, spell locks, physical adepts, and the finest assassins the nation has.

⭐⭐⭐ **THE ENGINE OF THE MIDDLE IS AN INVISIBLE SCOREBOARD, AND IT IS THE BEST MECHANIC IN THE SEASON.**

The gamemaster keeps a running **visible actions** tally. Public violence counts. Breaking any law counts. Carrying a visible weapon counts. Calling home counts, because the Tír monitors communications. Being a non-elf metahuman counts. Dating the wrong aristocrat counts. ⚠️ Prior history adjusts the starting number — a criminal record, previous work for Aztechnology, and, pointedly, **being British.**

⭐ A player can spend Karma to make a single lapse go unnoticed. **The tally is never shown.** The higher it climbs, the heavier and faster the response when the state finally moves, and by then it is much too late to be careful.

The middle days are a political tour with a courtship in them. The team's most charming member catches the eye of a bored young aristocrat from the transport family — ⚠️ who will flirt as long as she is entertained and will not give up anything useful until after everything goes wrong. ⭐ Her anti-trace cyberdeck later becomes very nearly essential.

⚠️⚠️ And at a hotel luncheon, company representatives hand the candidate's people **schematics of a harbour dock and its cargo-transfer facilities.** For the transit deal, ostensibly. For the smuggling route, actually.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **On the fourth evening the aide flies the team out to a hunting lodge for a "business meeting,"** which is the candidate sitting down with the Mafia — overcoated men with high-security briefcases and cybered troll bodyguards, *"a spy-fashion-parade of insincerity."*

An hour in, the mortars start. Terrorists hit the west wing with missiles, grenades and armour-piercing fire. Everyone runs for the helicopters. ⚠️ One of them explodes, which removes the team's way out. And as the aide boards the other, he turns and screams:

> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ ***"TRAITORS! Only YOU knew!"***

Then the adventure becomes a manhunt with the whole country on the other side. Calling home is monitored and each attempt is another mark on the tally. The news reports the tour proceeding exactly as scheduled, which is how they learn the cover-up is already running. ⭐ A neglected press aide, if anyone bothered to be kind to her earlier, remembers that the elven aide telephoned a *Prince* in Tír Tairngire before they ever left New York.

⚠ **In the fog of the Donegal forest there are fomorians** — trolls carrying the same virus that makes vampires, three metres and three hundred kilos, camouflaged in the earth, with corrosive secretions and shovels for limbs. They have no tactics whatsoever. They charge, and they pull heads off. ☆ A farming family with ancient shotguns and pitchforks takes the team in, sells them a truck, and sells them a son's unused cyberdeck — which may be the only reason the rest of the adventure is possible.

☆☆ **The counter-terror force's own Matrix system is sculpted as Celtic myth**, and it is one of the finest hosts in the KB: intruding deckers meet personas of mythic Irish heroes, datastores are subterranean burial cairns and standing stones, a barrier is a thorn hedge, killer IC is a fomorian, and black IC is a sword-carrying elven mage in a Celtic cloak. ☆ The sculpting also forces an intruder's persona into a humiliating peasant shape unless they fight it off. ⚠⚠ **This is where the false evidence framing them was planted.**

☆☆ **And there is a way out through the man hunting them.** The commanding officer resents the family sheltering the aide — a rival house — and if the team can prove they were framed, he will trade: go into the abbey, take the aide down, and he will make the terrorism charge disappear.

The abbey is a garden built to kill people. A three-metre hedge with sedating venom spines. Rhododendrons that fire barbed spines and release toxic gas. A lawn that slows movement. Ornamental ponds with a water elemental in each. Windows that vent acid gas.

☆☆☆ **And the ending is that the aide has already won.** His contacts gave him better evidence than he started with, the negotiations he was brokering are done, and he is going home to leak it and watch a mayoral candidate fall. **The runners are a loose end he would prefer dead.** ☆ His host, however, would genuinely rather talk — he does not know how thoroughly these people have been used.

☆☆ **The best outcome available is not victory. It is leverage.** Take proof of the aide's treachery to the candidate while holding real dirt on the candidate himself, and walk out of the country owed a favour by a man who is about to become mayor of New York.

⚠⚠ **And if they killed police or counter-terror officers along the way, he hands them over instead**, because by then that is the only thing that saves his campaign.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆ **A future mayor of New York who owes them**, in the best case.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Or a death sentence for terrorism**, or **cortex-bombed servitude to an elven court** — the module's own stated range of outcomes.
- ☆ **A contact inside a transport megacorporation**, if the flirtation was handled with any grace.
- **A working knowledge of how the Tír handles foreigners** — the permits, the DNA sample, the cortex bomb, the monitored calls, the tally nobody shows you.
- ⚠ **And the certain knowledge that they never met the person who did this to them.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆ **A Tír Tairngire prince running the whole affair from off-screen**	**Season 4** — the elves stop being a foreign government and become the plot
The mayoral candidate's debt	Any season; ☆ a favour from an American political machine is rare and portable

⚠⚠ **The Reach Fuileach**	Any Tír confrontation, for the rest of the campaign
The transport heiress	A contact with corporate reach and no discretion
☆ **The visible-actions tally**	⚠ Reusable anywhere the team operates inside a hostile state

☆☆ **CROSSOVER — WHY THESE PEOPLE ARE SO PATIENT.**

Tír na nÓg and Tír Tairngire are run, at the top, **by people who were adults before the Scourge.** They are not *like* the elves of Barsaive — ☆☆☆ **they are those elves**, and their politics are six thousand years into the same grudge. ⚠ That is the reason the manoeuvring in this module is so patient, so indirect, and so wildly disproportionate to a municipal election on another continent.

☆ The court threads also run, eventually, to **Alachia** — High Queen since before the Scourge, playing for rule as an end in itself, deliberately off the main spine. **A wildcard patron, never a partner.**

☆☆☆ **HOW TO PLANT IT, AND THIS IS THE NEATEST INSTRUCTION IN THE REGISTER:** combat is a liability in this module, and that is also the crossover lesson. **These people outlast rather than outfight.**

⚠⚠ **Let one NPC be inexplicably unhurried.** Not mystical, not cryptic — just a person who is not in any rush about something that ought to be urgent, and who treats a five-day political tour as a small manoeuvre in something longer. **Say nothing else.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE TÍR THREAD, THIRD BEAT, AND IT HAS BEEN ESCALATING ALL SEASON.**

Where	What happened
1.6	They learn Tír Tairngire runs assets inside Seattle, and quietly land on a list of meddlers
2.5	An accredited Tír ambassador murders their employer and walks away legally with the prize
2.10 *(here)*	⚠⚠ **They are inside the country, framed as terrorists, hunted by the state, by a plan a prince made before they were hired**

☆☆ Each step has moved them from *hearing about* the Tír, to *being beaten by* the Tír, to *being used by* the Tír. **Season 4 is where they find out how long this has been going on.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Tell them at the meet that this is not a shooting job**, and then let customs enforce it. **The disarming is not an obstacle to route around — it is the premise.**
- ☆☆☆ **Run the tally and never show it.** Mark everything. Say nothing. ☆ When the response finally arrives it should feel earned rather than arbitrary, and a player who spent Karma to stay invisible should quietly understand why.
- ☆ **The wristphones are a leash and the players should find that out at a bad moment**, not at the airport.
- ⚠⚠ **"Only YOU knew" is the whole pivot.** Deliver it as the man is boarding a helicopter and leaving them in a burning building. Do not soften it, and do not let them catch him.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not let them beat the counter-terror force in a fight.** The module says they have virtually no hope, and it is right. **Magic is their best lever, because Irish terrorists rarely have any and the state does not expect it.**
- ☆☆ **Let the aide win.** He goes home, he leaks the file, the candidate falls or does not. **The runners' victory is that they walk out of the country alive holding something valuable** — and in Season Two that is the correct shape for a win.

2.11 · Missing Blood — SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***The Universal Brotherhood*** (FASA) — a sourcebook with the adventure ***Missing Blood*** inside it. SR1; *The Grimoire* and *Sprawl Sites* are referenced but not required.

☆☆☆ **This is the origin point of the entire insect metaplot.** Chicago, Bug City, the Containment Zone and every hive in every later book descend from this one. Set in 2050, it runs at the campaign present essentially as written.

⚠⚠⚠ **It must be played before the exposé that opens Season Three, or the whole thing is spent.**

☆☆ **Karma:** recovering the necklace **5** · obtaining a copy of the Brotherhood's own book **3** · going with the detective into the Inner Circle **2**.

⚠⚠ **Note what is not on that list. There is no award for saving Victoria, because Victoria cannot be saved.**

WHAT HAPPENS

It begins as a thousand-nuyen domestic embarrassment.

Danial Simpson is a plump Renraku paper-pusher who has everything he ever wanted — a good salary, prestige, and a beautiful wife who despises him. Her father got him the job and he has not risen the way she wanted. ⚠ *"She sees him merely as the person who replenishes the credstick, which she drains daily."*

Victoria Delling was *"caring, concerned, loving. Everything Lucile was not."* He gave her a ruby necklace called **Blood** — sixty thousand nuyen from a named jeweller — and now he needs it back to prop up a story he is telling his wife.

☆☆☆ **And here is the thing that makes this book work, and it is not a horror beat.** Victoria joined the Universal Brotherhood a year before she met him. She had gone looking everywhere for help — tarot, tea leaves, the I Ching, astrology — and none of it worked, ⚠ **and she was contemplating suicide** when a card reader suggested the Brotherhood.

> ☆☆☆ ***"And the Brotherhood did, indeed, give Victoria the solace she so desperately needed. Through the teachings of the UB, she found purpose and meaning in life."***

The cult works. It genuinely helps people. That is the horror, and a gamemaster who plays it as sinister from the first scene has thrown the adventure away.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠⚠ **She is already in a cocoon**, in a chapterhouse, becoming a host.

☆☆ **Two smaller cruelties sit underneath the job.** She left a message on his office machine saying she was about to receive *"a great honour"* — ⚠ and he never heard it, because the private detective his wife hired to catch him cheating **pulled it off the phone tap and erased it.** That detective is an eccentric romantic who watches vintage black-and-white crime disks and is waiting for the right woman, and he **fell in love with Victoria from surveillance footage.** He erased the message to protect her, and *"decided to let Danial hang and get the girl for himself."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And the Brotherhood has a standing policy about people who ask questions**, stated flatly in the text: someone was always going to notice her absence, and *"the Brotherhood does not like loose ends. If this Danial, or anyone else, starts snooping around, the policy is to give them the brush-off the first time.* ⚠⚠⚠ ***If the snoop comes back a second time, they geek them.***"

The investigation escalates by degrees, and the escalation is the design. First it is easier and safer than most jobs. Then people are evasive about who Victoria was and where she went. Then muscle turns up. Then the team starts meeting people who are ⚠ *"a little bit different — mandibles for teeth and chitin-like flesh."*

⚠⚠⚠ **Then they find, in a hidden room behind a tarot reader's parlour, the corpse of a half-human, half-insect infant.**

And the last act is a raid on the Seattle chapterhouse, where they meet the two things this campaign has been circling all season: **insect spirits in true form, and people sealed in cocoons, still changing.**

☆☆☆ THE ENDING, WHICH IS THE BEST IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

They meet the client to hand over the necklace. He is in high spirits. *"He almost seems to be standing up straight."*

> *"Do you have it? Wonderful, wonderful! Lucile will be so happy. Thank you so much. Did Victoria...?* ⚠ *No, don't tell me.* ***I don't want to know where she was, what she was doing.***"
>
> *"You know... I think this whole thing was really for the best. Victoria was just some tramp looking for quick cash. She was never going to make me happy. But when she left, I had to examine what it was that was making me unhappy. I talked about it with my father-in-law — I'd never really been open with him before — and that night,* ***the night I hired you,*** ⚠⚠⚠ ***he took me to an organization that I think is really going to help me.***"

☆ Then he pays them, turns, and walks to his car **whistling.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The client has joined the cult. His father-in-law — a senior Renraku vice-president — recruited him on the same night he hired the team. They saved nobody, and they delivered a new member.**

AND THEN THEY CANNOT TELL ANYONE

⚠⚠ The module is explicit that going public fails: *"The Brotherhood's brethren are too well-entrenched to allow a full public disclosure.* ***Anyone to whom the runners tell the story will mysteriously die, the data will be wiped from the Matrix, and the Brotherhood will come after the runners with major muscle.***"

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐ If they lie low, the Brotherhood will not work very hard to find them — *"one reason shadowrunners can do what they do is because it's hard to extract revenge against people who don't officially exist."*

⚠ **And the necklace is unfenceable.** *"It would be like trying to fence the Mona Lisa."* They are carrying sixty thousand nuyen of jewellery they cannot convert into money.

> ⭐⭐ *"Running the shadows is no easy life, and sometimes it isn't even rewarding."*

✎ IF THEY TRY TO PUBLISH ANYWAY — the sourcebook already wrote that story, and it is the finest piece of horror in the KB.

A journalist called **Zeb Wanderly** got where the players are. His last journal entry begins: *"My name is Zeb Wanderly. I'm a dead man, and I know it…* ⚠ ***but I'm not handling it real well. I don't want to die."***

Then he reasons it out in real time. They want him dead because he knows. He is the only outsider left who knows. If he dies, the story dies. So he will dump it raw onto a network — ⚠⚠ **not a government or corporate net, because *"the Brotherhood IS the government, it IS the major corps"*** — but onto Shadowland, the runners' own board, routed to the Denver data haven. *"Instant dissemination, that's the answer."*

⭐ His entry ends: ***"If you're scanning this, then I have succeeded."***

⚠⚠⚠ **The next two pages of the book are nothing but** `NAK:Error sending on network`, **repeated over a hundred times**, then `Infinite re-try on alternate line`, then `Catastrophic Error`.

⭐⭐⭐ **And then the Shadowland board, minutes later, narrated entirely by strangers who have no idea what they are watching:**

> *"What the hell happened? Disk crash?"*
>
> *"Sorry for the inconvenience. The local server hub went down."*
>
> ⚠ *"No fragging kidding it went down.* ***I can see the flames from my window. Somebody took out the whole fragging building."***
>
> *"Hey, Sysop, what about file X3XL5? I was just opening it when the net crashed."*
>
> ***"I have no record of a file X3XL5."***
>
> *"What do you mean, no record of it? I was in the middle of opening the fragging thing."*
>
> *"I mean I have no record of it. Sorry."*
>
> *"Check Denver. Maybe they got it."*
>
> ⚠⚠ *"Sorry, chummers, no joy.* ***Denver data haven never got it. No transmission made, no attempts logged."***
>
> *"DREK!"*

⚠⚠⚠ **And the final page is a Lone Star memo closing the arson investigation into the bombing that killed him — blaming him for it — with a handwritten postscript from the captain who signed it:**

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"P.S. It's Tuesday, so I guess I'll see you tonight at the meeting. —Judy"***

Tuesday is Discovery Meeting night. The Lone Star arson captain who closed the file on Wanderly's murder, and wrote the official story blaming the victim, is a member of the Brotherhood — and she signs off like a colleague.

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Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

> ⭐⭐ **Run these beats against the players if they try to go public.** They do not need to be told what happened to Wanderly. **They need to watch it happen to them.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A thousand nuyen**, and a necklace worth sixty thousand that nobody will buy.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **The truth, and no way to say it.** ⭐ This is the season's thesis and it should be the last thing they feel.
- ⚠ **A client who is now inside the thing they just fought**, and who will never know.
- ⭐ **A detective**, if he lived — a sympathetic, ridiculous, heartbroken man who loved a woman he never met.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **The Brotherhood knows their faces**	**Season 3 onward.** ⚠ The book's own advice: weave a couple of scenarios around the cult trying to burn them — **but not right away**
⚠⚠ **The cult reaches vice-president level inside Renraku**	Standing fact; ⭐ a corporation the campaign returns to in Seasons 6–7
The client, converted	⭐ A Renraku executive inside the Brotherhood who owes them a favour and does not know what he joined
⚠ **The unfenceable necklace**	An object, not a payday; ⭐ excellent for a later favour

> ⭐⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — THE INVAE, AND THE STRUCTURAL RHYME IS THE POINT.**
>
> The insect spirits are **the invae** — the same hive shape, the same queens, the same use of people as hosts, and a known catastrophe in Barsaive six thousand years ago. ⚠ Dead **Scytha** hides them, which is a gamemaster's secret on that side too.
>
> ⚠⚠ **Do not supply the ancient context here.** No NPC knows. Let one old word survive — something in the hive's architecture, or an academic's aside about a name people used to use.
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **And the register makes the structural point better than I can:**
>
> > *"The runners find a hive under the city and nobody believes them — **which is exactly the position an Earthdawn party is in when it finds something in a sealed kaer that the surface world has agreed to forget.**"*
>
> ⭐ That is why the scheduling is load-bearing, and why this must run before the exposé. **The isolation is the crossover.** A group that later plays the Fourth World and walks into the invae will not need a single word of explanation.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **THE DRUMBEAT COMPLETES.** Four beats, three of them one line of newsprint: a Brotherhood building burns in **1.9**, awareness centres open downtown in **2.5**, three more Barrens missions are announced in **2.9** — and now they are standing inside it.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND 2.9 IS THE ONE THAT MATTERS.** In *Queen Euphoria* the team found a hive, a queen and a hundred cocooned people, and it was **one corrupted shaman in a Barrens warehouse**. Terrible, but explicable — a man went mad in a jungle and came back wrong.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠⚠ **Here the same architecture turns up inside a registered charity with offices downtown, a recruitment pipeline, a Lone Star captain, and a Renraku vice-president.**

☆☆ **It is not a madman. It is an institution, and it has been recruiting the whole time.** Two episodes apart, and the second one recontextualises the first entirely.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Play the Brotherhood warm.** The meetings are welcoming. The people are kind. The counselling helps. **Victoria was going to kill herself and they saved her life.** ⚠ If the table finds it sinister in the first hour, it is because you played it sinister, and you have thrown away the only thing that makes the ending land.
- ⚠⚠ **Two strikes.** Brush-off first, murder second. ☆ Let the players feel the moment the tone changes, and let it be their second visit somewhere.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **The infant is the hinge.** Do not build to it, do not foreshadow it. It is in a back room, and it is small, and it should stop the session dead.
- ☆☆ **Victoria cannot be saved and there is no Karma for trying.** Let them try anyway.
- ☆☆☆ **Deliver the client's final speech word for word, and let him whistle as he walks away.** Then say nothing at all. **End the session there.**
- ⚠ **If they go public, do not argue with them — just run it.** The contact who mysteriously dies. The file that vanishes. The building that burns. **The postscript from Judy.**

SEASON TWO — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

☆ **The second ledger. Everything below is planted and unexplained.**

Planted	Where	Collected
The Brotherhood knows their faces	2.11	**Season 3 onward**
The cult reaches VP level inside Renraku	2.11	Standing
A megacorp owns sim footage of insect spirits	2.9	⚠ Open
Cocoons the team did not open	2.9	**1–5 weeks**
Ehran framed as an embezzler	2.8	**Season 4**
The jester seal, seen twice	1.4 · 2.8	**Season 4**
The silver-haired elf in Ehran's entourage	2.8	**3·3**
Both policlubs hunting them	2.8	Any season
A Tír Tairngire prince who never appeared	2.10	**Season 4**
A future mayor of New York owes them	2.10	Any season
The bottle, still unexplained	2.5	⚠⚠ **Never** — see 4.6
An accredited Tír ambassador who kills	2.5	**Season 4**
Renraku experiments on people and walks away	2.6	**Seasons 6–7**
A grieving dragon who knows their faces	2.1	Any season
Perianwyr, deliberately unassigned	2.1	⚠ Never

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

⚠️⚠️ **And the season's real inheritance is a state of mind.** They know about the bugs. They cannot prove it, they cannot publish it, and the one person they told has joined. ☆☆☆ **Season Three opens by taking that away from them — the exposé breaks, the world finds out, and somebody else gets the credit.**

SEASON THREE · Everyone Knew and Nobody Said

2055. Streetwise to Veteran, 40–70 Karma.

⚠⚠⚠ **Open the season by firing the beat, before any adventure starts.**

The Universal Brotherhood exposé breaks. What the team saw alone in a chapterhouse basement is now on every trid screen in the world — the cocoons, the hosts, the recruitment pipeline, all of it — ⚠ **and somebody else's name is on the story.** Within months, **Chicago is sealed.**

☆☆☆ **This costs one scene and it is the payoff of two entire seasons of planting.** They were right. They could not prove it. They told one person and he joined. And now the world knows, and nobody will ever know they knew first.

☆ **Play their reaction, then move on.** The season that follows is about everything else that was hiding in plain sight — a virus, a corporation, a whistleblower, a politician, and finally a great dragon who has been watching the whole time.

3.1 · Peacekeeper

SOURCE

📕 ***Native American Nations, Volume 1*** (FASA #7208, SR2) — the adventure half of the book. ☆ The other half is the nation-by-nation sourcebook material.

⚠ Set around 2052, which is essentially campaign-present. **A playable-now module, not a future-dated one.**

☆☆ **Karma:** the decker neutralised **+2** · the assassination prevented **+2** · the tonal generator deactivated **+2** · Jesse killed or captured **+2** · Renraku *not* recovering its device **+1** · Aurora killed or captured **+1**.

⚠⚠ **And two penalties, which are the only ones on the sheet:** killing the FBI agent **−1**, and killing **Joey**, the thirteen-year-old ork who guides them underground, **−2.**

WHAT HAPPENS

A toxic shaman is trying to start a war between the Native American Nations, and he is very close to succeeding.

Jesse John is rail-thin, with cold steel eyes, a black ponytail, rattlesnake-skin boots with silver toe-caps, and fingernails filed to razors. No cyberware, a great many fetishes. He was born on the Queen Charlotte Islands as Tsimshian seceded, rebelled against everything his tribe raised him to be, killed a man at fourteen, fled to Seattle, and became a rabid anti-tribal member of the **Humanis Policlub**. ⚠⚠ He now serves a toxic totem, and in the prologue he kills four Red Samurai with his hands.

His plan is patient and it is three-part. Stage incidents inside several nations, each one framed so it looks like a different nation did it — Sioux against Pueblo, Ute against Sioux, Cascade Ork against everybody. Then smuggle a stolen Renraku device — ⚠ **a tonal generator that manipulates emotion** — into a **Salish-Shidhe Council** meeting, and let it tear the Council apart in front of witnesses.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE PEOPLE WHO HIRE THE RUNNERS TO STOP HIM ARE THE HUMANIS POLICLUB.**

Their Mr. Johnson is **Karl Brackhaven**, head of the Central Seattle chapter, posing as an Aztechnology executive with a faked expense trail to match. ⚠⚠ **The club's moderates want Jesse stopped because a race war would be catastrophic public relations.** That is the entire moral content of their position.

⚠ The two razorguys sent to collect the team are *"obnoxiously rude to metahumans and Amerindians"* — the book warns there is a fine line between blowing the meet and insulting the players' own characters. ⭐ **The first contact with this employer is his people being racist at the team, and it is deliberate.**

The fee is a hundred and fifteen thousand. Twenty down. ⚠ And *"backup never materializes."*

The route runs Seattle to Ute to Las Vegas to Pueblo and back to Seattle, and the runners are hunted the whole way by two organisations who have both drawn the same wrong conclusion. **Renraku** wants its stolen device and thinks these people took it. ⭐⭐ **And the FBI thinks they are Jesse's backup** — which produces the best scene in the first act: a staged viral quarantine at the Salish border, ⚠ with a conveniently unlocked window and a conveniently parked van containing a hidden federal transponder. **The Feds want them to escape and lead them to Jesse.** A clever team takes the van and never knows; a very clever team takes the van *knowing*.

⚠⚠⚠ **The real trap is at the Kokomo**, a Las Vegas apartment hotel where Humanis goons are cleaning out Jesse's room. Among what is left behind is a broken tonal generator, an address in Provo — ⚠ **and a data chip Jesse intends for them to find.** It holds a **Sioux Special Forces masking utility**, targeted at exactly one address: the **Pueblo Council's financial network.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Jesse is not trying to stop the runners. He is trying to recruit them.** If they use that chip, they will break into a Pueblo system with a Sioux military tool, and Pueblo will blame the Sioux — and the third front of his war will have been opened by the people hired to prevent it.

Inside the Pueblo net they meet **Ram**, the decker Jesse hired: a black-furred humanoid icon carrying a neon-red laser katana. ⚠ He deliberately trips the alarm, because he wants it, and uses a key to rewire the host's adaptive architecture to herd the team's decker into the ice.

In Pueblo itself the tone changes completely. There are no Anglos on the street. Nobody is hostile, exactly, ⚠ but the locals and the security forces watch outsiders *"like a snake watches a rabbit."*

⭐⭐ **And underneath the city there is something worth the whole trip.** Behind a derelict warehouse, down a hidden stair, is **Pueblo-Under** — a haven of the **Underground Awakened**, a peaceable tribe of goblinized outcasts who have reconciled the old tribal ways with what the Awakening made them. Their council room is a hydroponic garden lit like an Impressionist painting, guarded by a city spirit. Their chief is a Dog-totem troll shaman who orchestrates by consensus and protects her people fiercely — ⚠ **and who will not help fight Jesse, because it is not the tribe's concern.**

⭐ Their guide is **Joey**, thirteen, an ork, and extremely mouthy. ⚠⚠ **He is worth minus two Karma if he dies, and the module does not tell the players that.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

⚠⚠⚠ **The frame in Pueblo is the cruellest thing in the module.** Jesse, posing as a Sioux Special Forces major, has *"programmed"* a troll called **Crunch** for a secret mission of great importance. Crunch is to assassinate a prominent Pueblo politician. ⚠⚠ **And then Crunch's body — already dead — will be dropped from the roof in Sioux army surplus, loaded with incriminating evidence, so that it stops a few rounds on the way down and is found as the assassin.**

The patsy is a corpse before the shot is fired. He is being used as ballistic evidence.

The target is a mundane anti-BTL street crusader, and the sniper on the roof is Jesse's cybered lieutenant, protected by a toxic earth spirit and carrying a plane ticket, ⚠ because Jesse is already flying home.

The climax is on Council Island. The Salish-Shidhe Council is meeting in Seattle as a gesture of goodwill, in a longhouse built at corporate scale, and getting onto the island means visas, a guarded crossing, credstick and passport and weapon scans, ⚠ and undocumented cyberarms being disabled at the gate. Ringing it: island police, Metroplex Guards, Rangers, combat mages, an assault cannon on a bipod, armed rotorcraft and man-portable missile teams.

⚠⚠ At **11:55** Jesse installs the generator.

And Brackhaven's last note to them is signed with his initials and reads: *"Our mutual friend's target is the Council meeting tomorrow… discharge your obligation, both to me and **to your nation**."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Up to a hundred and fifteen thousand nuyen — ☆ which the team may well refuse once they learn who signed the cheque.** The module expects that, and notes that getting revenge on him is very hard.
- ⚠⚠ **A list of potential permanent enemies unmatched in the campaign so far:** the FBI, the Humanis Policlub, Renraku, the Salish Rangers, the Council Island Police, and the Pueblo and Ute security forces.
- ☆☆ **Or the opposite** — a nation that did not tear itself apart, and a handful of people who know why.
- ☆ **Pueblo-Under**, if they were decent to it: a hidden community of Awakened outcasts under a foreign city.
- ⚠ **And possibly a surviving toxic shaman**, who the book says returns *"even more powerful."*

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Karl Brackhaven, chapter head**	**Season 5.** ⚠ They will see this man again **in a presidential debate**, and they will be the only people in the room who have taken his money
☆☆ **Humanis has factions, and the moderate one hires shadowrunners**	Standing; ☆ it makes the policlub an organisation rather than a mob
A Renraku device that manipulates emotion	⚠ Fourth Renraku item in the campaign; the corporation keeps building things that operate on minds
Pueblo-Under and the Underground Awakened	A foothold in a nation the team has no other way into
⚠ **Jesse John, if he lived**	Returns stronger; ☆ or his heirs do

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

> **CROSSOVER — none, and none belongs here.** *Peacekeeper* is entirely Sixth World: tribal politics, a policlub, a stolen corporate device. ☆ The season's crossover weight is carried by **3.3** and by the finale in **3.7**; this episode's job is to put a name in the players' mouths that will matter in two seasons.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **The Salish-Shidhe, and the bill for two seasons of border crossings.** The team crossed Salish land in **1.3** and again in **1.5**, and the module warned then that killing tribal warriors would sour the whole nation against them. ⚠ **This adventure ends on Council Island, in a Salish security cordon, needing their goodwill.** Whatever they did out there, it is now load-bearing.

☆ **And 2.2, quietly.** The Humanis Policlub rioted at City Hall in a newsnet the players read three episodes ago, against declaring an official Awakening Day. **Now Humanis is signing their pay chits.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Do not reveal the employer early, and do not soften him when you do.** The reveal that Brackhaven is a Humanis chapter head should arrive late enough that the team has already taken his money and done his work. ⚠ **The moral discomfort is the episode.**
- ⚠⚠ **Let his people be rude to the team's own metahuman characters at the first meeting.** It is written in, it is uncomfortable, and it establishes exactly what these employers are before anyone knows who they are.
- ☆☆ **The planted chip is the test.** A team that uses the Sioux utility opens a war front for the villain. ⚠ Give them every chance to examine it, and if they use it anyway, **let it work exactly as Jesse intended.**
- ☆ **Take the bugged van.** It is a genuinely good vehicle and the federal transponder is nearly undetectable. **A team that finds it later and realises they were the bait has had a good session.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Joey is thirteen.** He is annoying, he is in the way, and he is worth minus two Karma. **Do not warn them and do not protect him.**
- ☆ **The NAN survives if they do their job**, and the book's own line is worth keeping: *"Despite the doom its detractors predict, the NAN works."* ⚠ The repair is political, slow, and done with words — **not by the runners.**

3.2 · DNA/DOA

SOURCE

📕 ***DNA/DOA*** (FASA #7101, SR1, by Tom Dowd) — ☆ **the first Shadowrun adventure ever published.** Set around 2050, which is essentially campaign-present; a home-turf Tacoma run.

☆☆ **Karma:** the viral sample recovered **+2** · the data file **+1** · **Dr. Owens rescued +2** · the kidnapped orks rescued **+1** · ⚠⚠⚠ **killing the ork children −2.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
Payment: sixty thousand advance, thirty thousand for an intact sample (five if damaged), thirty for the file, ⭐ and **fifty thousand more for Dr. Owens** — who objects to being bought and goes anyway.

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **Open with the prologue and read it aloud.** *"Into the Flames"* is an old ork telling ork children, in an underground town, what happened in Tacoma on the seventh of February 2039.

Humanis rallies. Metahuman families declared health hazards and moved out of their homes by *health inspectors*. Everyone herded down to the docks for *decontamination and resettlement*, with **Hands of Five** men giving the salute as they went past. Families divided at the checkpoint — humans to the left, orks to the right. ⚠⚠⚠ **And then a warehouse packed with orks was set on fire on purpose**, with grenades and gunfire and locked doors, and thousands of people died in it.

The narrator was a boy. He got out through a drainage tunnel into the sewers, and the survivors built a town down there. ⭐ **This is the definitive account of the Night of Rage in the entire knowledge base, and it is the moral spine of everything that follows.**

The job is a datasteal. Biogene Technologies wants a recombinant-DNA process out of Aztechnology's Tacoma research park: a viral vector that grafts one organism's traits onto another, ⚠⚠ **which would let Aztechnology manufacture its own metahuman subspecies.** A hundred and twenty thousand nuyen, in through the sewers, out to a ship at Wharf 114 by daybreak.

⚠ **There is no scouting.** The Matrix approach is suicide — the Aztech Seattle system runs to thirty-eight security levels, including *"the quasi-mythical Level 30"* where prototype black IC is tested, and *"no one has ever done it and lived long enough to talk about it."* Astral scouting gets a mage swarmed by Rating-8 elementals as a warning, and a second attempt as an attack.

So they go in blind, through a kilometre of abandoned sewer, and through a mirror-gloss wall dissolved by a catalyst Biogene supplies.

⚠⚠⚠ **And there has been an accident twenty-four hours earlier.** The Metavirus spilled in Beta Section. It killed some of the staff and changed the rest. ⭐ **The survivors have staked out territories and food is short, so the runners are simply meat that has walked in.**

What is loose in there: dog-sized cockroaches — ⭐ which die in forty-eight hours and cannot breed, and whose appearance is what first alerted the lab that something was wrong — three-metre venomous flesh worms, and the **Sapiens**: human-animal crossbreeds. ⚠⚠ One of them is **Dr. Perkins**, now orange and black-furred with paws for hands, insane, hiding under the meeting-room table with his security pass still on him.

⭐⭐⭐ **THE DATA FILE IS TWO MEMOS AND THEY ARE THE WHOLE ADVENTURE.**

Dr. Carol Owens wrote the first: *"I see the controlled development of the Metagene as a wondrous tool in the hands of an evolving humanity … **the salvation of the next generation of 'lost children' — Orks, goblins, and such — who will no longer have to face the torments and prejudices that scarred their ancestors.**"*

Dr. Simon Peterhoff wrote the second, and it is a progress report on livestock. Wolf Sapiens, the most stable line, with a vocabulary of about a hundred words. Tiger Sapiens, sixty words of comprehension, claws that will not retract. ⚠ Bear Sapiens, *"a nearly unmanageable headache,"* near-zero intelligence and in continuous pain.

⭐⭐ **The same research. One of them wanted to end prejudice forever. The other is force-breeding chimeras** — and, as the team will learn later, **doing it with genetic material taken from orks kidnapped out of the sewers.**

Two other parties want this. Aztechnology wants it back. And the **Hands of Five** — the local chapter of Alamos 20,000 — want it for the opposite purpose: ⚠⚠⚠ **a virus that reverts metahuman fetuses to human, which would erase metahumanity within a generation**, marketed through a policlub front as a *cure*.

⚠ **And Biogene is running a second team at the backup site.** The file the runners are risking their lives for is a partial. **They are a diversion, and nobody told them.**

⚠⚠ **The rendezvous is at the dock where it happened.** Wharf 114 is the same stretch of waterfront where metahumans were corralled and burned in 2039. Alamos has already taken the ship and killed the contact. Then the Aztechnology response team arrives in vans and helicopters and opens fire on everybody.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN THE MODULE ASKS ITS QUESTION.**

The warehouse the team takes cover in is one of the original holding pens. It is now a hidden entrance to the ork enclave, and a place children are told not to play. ⚠⚠ **Two ork children are inside when the shooting starts**, and their babysitter — a human metahuman-rights activist — runs out into a three-way corporate firefight to get them.

⚠⚠⚠ **Whether the runners shoot those children decides the entire remainder of the adventure**, and nobody tells them that. Harm one and the enclave treats them as hostile prisoners. Spare them and its elder becomes an ally.

⭐⭐ **Wilhelm Park is worth the trip on its own** — four hundred people living in a shopping mall buried by the 2017 volcanic eruptions, found by the survivors of the fire. Hydroponic farms, bred meat animals, light tapped from the gas mains, schools and shops on the lower level. ⚠ There is a modern condominium block standing directly on top of it whose residents have no idea.

And the elder knows Dr. Owens, which is the scene the adventure is built toward. *"Dr. Owens, I am ashamed."* She threw away a research grant once; he can still recite her gene-mapping codes from memory. She explains what happened — that the corporation brought Peterhoff in to weaponise her work, that she opposed him, ⚠ **that when she found out they were taking orks out of the sewers for raw material she protested**, and that after the accident she was jailed and blamed for it.

⚠ His message to the runners is four words long: **do not create monsters.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The safe house is a trap, and it is important that it is not his fault.** The address was routed through the Biogene executive's own assistant — a familiar, trusted face who is an Alamos sympathiser and tipped off the Hands of Five. ⭐ The finale is a three-way at that house, in which **Aztechnology wants the sample, the file and Owens, and is entirely indifferent to the hostages, the fanatics and the runners.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Up to a hundred and seventy thousand nuyen**, and Dr. Owens, who did not want to be part of the transaction.

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- ⚠⚠ **Alamos 20,000 with their faces and their names.** ☆ Aztechnology will not identify them, but the policlub will — **lie low for a month or two.**
- ☆☆ **Wilhelm Park**, if they earned it: four hundred people, a secret they are trusted with, and an elder who owes them.
- ⚠ **Or the opposite**, and there is no way back from it.
- ☆ **And the knowledge that they were the diversion**, if they ever work out that their file was a partial.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆ **Wilhelm Park and the Tacoma ork underground**	Standing; ☆ a hidden community that trusts them, under a city they work in constantly
⚠⚠ **Alamos 20,000 knows them**	Any season — ☆ an ideological enemy rather than a corporate one, which behaves completely differently
The Metagene research, in two hands	The gene-tech thread; ⚠ and the "cure" front is a policlub argument that will recur
☆ **A newsnet line: Ehran the Scribe will address the Young Elven Technologists on the 8th**	**Season 4** — see the crossover box, and **do not draw attention to it**
Aztechnology hunting them	The Aztlan spine, all the way to **4.6**

> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AZTECHNOLOGY, THIRD PANEL, AND ONE INSTRUCTION THAT MATTERS MORE THAN THE REST.**
>
> Identities were laid out at **1.5**; do not restate them. What this episode adds is the argument, completed.

Where	What the corporation did
1.5	Funded a man's preparations to cut his daughter's heart out, and wanted to see whether it worked
2.1	Commissioned a woman rebuilt as a container, wired so her own body could reward and punish her on command
3.2 *(here)*	Force-bred human-animal chimeras from genetic material taken out of orks it kidnapped from the sewers

> ☆☆ **None of those three decisions makes financial sense**, and that is the entire point. ⚠ The register's line: *the willingness to do this to living people is six thousand years old — the Great Project gathered the world's knowledge and paid for it in blood as a matter of **method**, not cruelty.*
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE INSTRUCTION, WHICH IS EXPLICIT IN THE MODULE'S OWN CROSSOVER BLOCK:** Ehran the Scribe appears in this episode's newspaper. **Do not connect the elven thread and the Aztlan thread out loud, ever.** ☆☆☆ *"The runners connecting those two themselves, four seasons later, is the point."*
>
> ☆ So: print the line about his speaking engagement, in among the sports results and the hurricane, and say absolutely nothing.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆ **The Aztlan spine, third of four** — and this is the one where it stops being rumour. In 1.5 the corporation was an account number on a tuition invoice. In 2.1 it was a name on a commission.

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Here the players are standing inside one of its laboratories, reading its internal memos, and looking at what it made.

⭐⭐ **And 2.6, structurally.** Two episodes ago a corporation ran illegal experiments on people, got caught, disowned two employees and moved the programme elsewhere. **The players have now seen the same institutional shape twice, at two different corporations, and drawn their own conclusions about how this world is organised.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Read "Into the Flames" aloud, in full, before anything else happens.** It is a old man telling children about the night his family was burned alive, and it is why the ork children in the warehouse matter. ⚠ **Do not summarise it.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Give no warning about the children, and no second chance.** They are in a firefight the runners started, in a building the runners chose, and the module scores it at minus two.
- ⭐⭐ **Put the two memos in front of them together.** Owens' paragraph about lost children and Peterhoff's vocabulary counts, on the same chip. **Let a player read both out.**
- ⚠ **Make it clear afterwards that the elder did not betray them.** The leak came from their employer's own office. ⭐ A team that blames the orks for it has been handed the module's thesis and refused it.
- ⭐ **Aztechnology does not care about them.** In the final firefight it is not hunting the runners — it is retrieving property, and they are in the way. **That is scarier than being hunted.**

3.3 · Harlequin, chapter 5 — COUNTERSTROKE

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305), mini-adventure 5 of 8. ⚠ Requires ***The Grimoire***. Thread rules at **1.4**; the previous beat was **2.8**.

⭐⭐ **Karma:** each survivor **+1** · escaping the cell **+1** · defeating their captors **+1** · the opposition **+2** · ⭐ individual awards for **particularly good roleplaying under torture**, and for **handling Iggy well** — and ⚠⚠ *"if medical attention is given to either a dying Iggy or Bonecrack,* ***compassion is worth a point****."*

⚠⚠⚠ **CONTENT NOTE, AND IT IS A REAL ONE.** The player characters are captured, stripped, imprisoned and tortured over several days by a cheerful man who enjoys it, while an elf stands beside him mocking them for their race. **Say so before you schedule it.** It is the best chapter in the campaign and it is not for every table.

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **This is the chapter where the campaign explains itself — to the players, by their torturer.**

Ehran has worked out that he is being played, and he moves. His opening line, over a polluted Seattle at twilight: *"Again they plague me. Pawns moved by a hand I cannot plainly see. It*

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*is not to be borne... **Chal'han is a game of many moves, and the time has come for mine.**"*
Then: *"Go to these tools of my enemy. Learn what they know. **Teach them fear.**"*

⚠⚠ **And the ritual is the only reason the team survives.** *"The elaborate protocols of chal'han discourage anything so crude as simply gunning down the shadowrunners...* ☆☆ ***Even pawns must have their chance to escape.***" **The rules of the Game are load-bearing.** He is not permitted to simply kill them, so he sends an agent to capture them, hurt them, learn what they know, and let them go — as a demonstration of contempt for whoever is moving them.

☆☆☆ **THE AGENT IS THE BEST DESIGN TURN IN THE WHOLE CAMPAIGN.**

Ariel is an extremely old **free air elemental**, and she will do exactly as she is told, because Ehran knows her **true name** and has bound her with it. She cannot act against him. She cannot try to break his hold.

> ☆☆☆ *"On the other hand, if she can cause the mortals to go after her master, perhaps let them find clues to his identity ... **well, that is hardly her fault, is it? Service to a magician is galling to a spirit that has tasted freedom.**"*

⚠⚠ **The antagonist of this chapter is deliberately leaking her master's identity to the people she is torturing, because she wants them to go and kill him.** Every clue they find in her quarters was left there on purpose.

The bait is a completely honest job. A legitimate Johnson wants a minor extraction — a small cog at a food company, five thousand each, pickup at a park at sunset, and the recognition phrase is *"We're from the Easter Bunny."* ⚠⚠ **There is nothing wrong with the offer.** The Johnson really does need the extraction and really did pick this team for sensible reasons.

⚠⚠⚠ **Ariel simply told the target's corporate security that a major raid was coming**, using Ehran's network to make the warning credible. The security director believed her completely. The woman waiting in the park is *"drugged to the eyebrows... **She's bait. You're hosed.**"*

☆ **The trap is beautifully staged:** four plainclothes officers in the plaza — two men playing chess, a couple necking by the bandstand, *"their job is to keep the runners occupied until the heavy infantry hits"* — two concealed squads in heavy armour, three patrol cars sealing the streets, and a helicopter arriving five turns in whose autocannon ⚠ **will concentrate on the runners' vehicles.**

☆☆ **And the module tells you to miss:** *"most of the fire directed at the runners should MISS. This fracas is not the reason for the adventure. However, as soon as the heavy artillery shows up in the skies, a couple of lucky shots will wipe out their vehicle(s)."*

Then the rescue arrives, an armoured van slewing across the grass with its back doors already open and a woman at the wheel: *"So, are you guys going my way, or would you rather stick around and wait for your new friends to catch up with us?"*

⚠ She smiles. Eyelids get heavy. **Gas.** She drops her physical form and leaves astrally while the ganger riding shotgun seals the van and floods it. ☆ A lovely detail: the van is bugged for video and audio, *"and Bonecrack will kill the offender when he sees the tapes"* — because the ganger held his breath and knew what was coming.

☆ Outside, Ariel hovers in human shape, watching clairvoyantly — ⚠ *"the sight of a pretty girl floating three meters off the ground might clue in an onlooker that all is not as it seems."*

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⚠⚠ **She needs only one prisoner for the counterstroke to proceed.** ☆ *"If everyone gets away from this trap, the counterstroke is foiled."* And if the team refuses the job outright, she waits — *"any time the runners are on the losing end of a fight in the future, she can bail them out as described here."*

They wake in a decommissioned government safe house, a bungalow on a sea cliff over an underground installation, with a tunnel down to a cave at sea level ⚠ *"useful for clandestine arrivals by boat — or for the secret disposal of certain items."*

⚠⚠ **They are stripped to the skin and in restraints**, and any magician among them is dosed with a drug that adds **ten to every mental and magical test** until they are given the antidote. Even attempting astral projection takes five to ten minutes and a Willpower test at 10.

☆ The guards load stun rounds. ⚠ **Bonecrack's machine gun does not.** *"With armor, they might still have a chance, but buck naked?"* He recognises the situation for exactly what it is and offers only: *"**Nothing personal, chummers. Biz.**"*

☆☆☆ THE THREE THINGS THIS CHAPTER PUTS IN FRONT OF THEM

① **The face on the dresser.** Ariel does not sleep or bathe, so her room holds nothing but equipment: a coded wristphone that dials exactly one number **in Tír Tairngire** and self-destructs if used for anything else; a certified credstick for sixty thousand dollars; ☆☆☆ **and a small holodisplay cycling through paintings.** *"One shows a delicate-featured nobleman in French court garb of the 17th century. One is a stylized portrait of a lady in Spanish dress, dating from the early 15th century."*

⚠ Recognising the nobleman is a test — and the module writes the ladder of results, ending at: *"**HEY! That sure looks a hell of a lot like that Ehran the Scribe guy...**"*

☆☆ **Two portraits, two centuries apart, of two people standing in this building right now. She left them switched on.**

② **Doctor What.** *"All smiles, a chubby little guy bustles in, looking like a beardless Santa Claus. **'Hello! What is my name.'** It's a statement, not a question, and he laughs with innocent delight at your double-take."* He ties on an apron, attaches electrodes, rambles pleasantly, and then: *"'I think we're ready now,' he beams. **'Pain!'**"*

⚠ *"Most people hate toothache worse than anything. **I find that when you hit just the right nerves, they really don't like it.**"* And when told the prisoner will not talk: *"Oh, mercy my, right now, **I don't want to know anything.** Maybe later we'll find a few things to talk about."*

⚠⚠ **The first round is pure pain and no questions at all.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And Lancelot Windtree attends every session** — the arrogant elf the module told you to point out in **2.8**. *"Lancelot enjoys his duties... The strong ones he mocks for resisting pointlessly. Those who break he mocks for their weakness.* ⚠ ***Non-Elves are informed that their obvious racial inferiority explains their behavior, while Elves are castigated for making such a poor showing in adversity.***"

③ **And then the questions start, and they are about the campaign.**

> ☆☆☆ *"Doctor What asks about **earlier runs** made as part of Harlequin... **The players should be familiar with the subjects about which their characters are being***

> ***questioned. They learn that this run is linked to those previous jobs, and that those jobs are, apparently, linked to one another.***"

⭐⭐⭐ **Five chapters of deliberately disconnected work, and the connection is finally explained to them by a man who is electrocuting them to get it.** It is the single best inversion in the campaign: the players do not deduce the shape of the story, **they are interrogated about it.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE WAY OUT IS A TROLL WITH A TOY

A toy police car, lights flashing and siren going, rolls through the bars and bumps a runner's foot.

> *"C'n I have my polithe car back, pleathe?"*

A big, slack-jawed, shy troll at the bars. *"My big brother gave it to me on my latht birthday."* Then, hopefully: ***"Thay, are you crookth?"***

⚠ A guard shoves him away — *"Beat it, feeb... Nobody's supposed to be talkin' to 'em, trog, so buzz!"* — and a tear rolls down one warty cheek. Then Iggy brightens and says *"Marty!"*, and **Bonecrack** takes the mercenary by the throat and puts him into the wall. ***"You don't talk to my brother that way, chummer. Ever."*** He beats him to his knees, tells him to pick up his weapon and get back to work, and then looks at the prisoners: *"How about the kid's car?"*

And that is the whole adventure, right there.

- ⚠ **Be unpleasant to him** and Bonecrack leads him away. *"They have behaved like typical denizens of the world as he knows it. No surprise."*
- ⭐ **Give the car back** and Iggy is delighted, and curious. *"Why are they in jail, Marty? They aren't crookth, are they?"*
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Be kind to him** and *"the Troll will be as ecstatic as a friendly puppy who's been petted."* ⚠ *"His mind is a child's, but his body and feelings are adult."*

⚠⚠ **The consequence:** the next time his new friend is taken out, Iggy follows and watches through a doorway. What he sees makes him frantic — and the runner, strapped down, watches **Lancelot start a spell and get backhanded into a wall by Bonecrack**, while Doctor What smiles and paralyses the runner's vocal cords so he cannot call out. Then Ariel appears in the doorway and says one thing in Elvish: ⭐ ***"The master forbids fighting among us."***

⭐⭐⭐ **And later Iggy comes back with "a prethent."** He gives them the toy police car, because they need cheering up, and hurries away nervous — *"Marty may get mad, but **Iggy thinks it's wrong to hurt the 'crookth' so bad, especially if he likes one of them.**"*

⚠⚠ **Inside the passenger compartment is a ceramic tube holding a monofilament utility saw.** *"It'll cut through a bar in one action."*

THE OTHER WAY OUT, FOR TEAMS WHO WERE NOT KIND

⭐⭐ Every time the torture rig powers up, the lights flicker. A ladder of Perception tests turns that into a fact — first that there is a faint buzzing when it happens, then that it is coming from the door. ⭐ **The rig's power draw is affecting the cell lock.**

Short out the cell light or camera during a session while somebody slams the door, and the lock springs. ⚠ Whoever smashes the fixture takes a jolt for it — or the players do something cleverer, like throwing water into it.

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⚠⚠ **And then:** *"Once out of the cell, the prisoners are still naked, and if armed, only with the corridor guard's weapon and their own cyber-implants. Against the heavily armed and armored opposition,* ***they'll last about twelve seconds.****"*

☆☆ **The win condition is a detail they had to notice earlier.** The complex has air-system controls, and Ariel is **vulnerable to enclosed space.** Seal the installation and *"Ariel cannot get into the complex, and can only follow the fighting over the intercom."*

⚠⚠ **And the brothers decide the fight.** Iggy runs around the complex in danger from both sides, *"intensely excited by all the fuss"* — and **if he is in the line of fire, Bonecrack will not let his men shoot.** Lancelot has no such scruple, ☆ which *"may cause an open rift between the samurai and the mage."*

⚠⚠⚠ *"If either brother goes down, it will effectively take the other one out of play. If Bonecrack dies, Iggy will go berserk. If Iggy dies, Bonecrack knows to exact revenge…* ***If the runners can save the dying brother, they will make allies of both.****"*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **The knowledge that every job they have taken from a strange Johnson since 1.4 was the same job.** ⚠ They do not know whose, or why. **They know it is one target and one hand.**
- ☆☆ **A name and a face: Ehran the Scribe.** ⚠ And a Tír commcode that stops working within a day.
- ⚠ **Whatever the torture cost them**, in wounds and in how each character behaved.
- ☆ **Bonecrack and Iggy**, as friends or as a coming reckoning. ⚠ *"Having a revenge-crazed killer like Bonecrack on your side can be like having a tactical nuke with an unstable fuse for a sidearm. Impressive, but hard to live with."*
- ⚠ **And two people they cannot reach:** the doctor, who buys protection from a yakuza gang — *"hunting him down will be an adventure in itself"* — and Lancelot, who goes home to the Tír, where *"going after him is impossible."*

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The jobs are connected and aimed at one powerful target**	**4.5** — where they finally meet the man moving them
☆☆ **Ehran's name and face**	**Season 4**, and everything in it
☆ **Two portraits, 15th and 17th century**	⚠ The immortality tell, left lying on a dresser by a spirit who wants him dead
Doctor What, under yakuza protection	An open hunt whenever the table wants it
⚠ **Bonecrack and Iggy**	Allies or enemies, decided entirely by a toy car

> ☆☆ **CROSSOVER — nothing new is added; the identities were laid out at 1.4. But note what Ariel is.**
>
> She is an ancient free spirit **bound by her true name**, who cannot act against her master and therefore arranges for other people to do it. ⚠ Do not build anything on this, and do not have anyone remark on it.

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> **🔪 A RESONANCE, CLEARLY LABELLED — this is NOT in the crossover register and I am not claiming it is.**
>
> The principle that knowing a being's **true Name** grants power over it is the foundational magical law of the Fourth World. Here, in 2055, **an immortal elf is using exactly that principle to keep an ancient spirit in servitude**, and the spirit resents it precisely as a free being would.
>
> ⭐ It is also perfectly ordinary Sixth World occultism, which is why it works as a plant: **it needs no explanation and looks like nothing.** A group that later learns how Naming works in Barsaive may remember a bound elemental who wanted her name back.
>
> ⚠️ Say nothing, add nothing, and do not let an NPC gloss it.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐ **2.8, exactly as promised.** The module told you to point out the arrogant silver-haired elf at the party. **He is now standing over the players while they are tortured, explaining that their failure is racial.** Nobody has to say a word about it.

⭐⭐⭐ **And the whole thread, all at once.** 1.4, 1.8, 2.3 and 2.8 were built to feel unconnected — a manuscript, some ear tips, a book in Bavaria, a bank job. **Here a man with electrodes asks them about all four in a row**, and the players work out the shape of their own campaign while their characters are trying not to answer.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Get consent before you run this.** Then run it seriously. **Do not play the torture for comedy** — Doctor What is funny, which is the horror, and the joke is entirely his.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Let Ariel's clues be found.** She wants them found. If the players miss the holodisplay, have it cycle again while they are being marched past the door. **She is trying to get her master killed and she is depending on them being observant.**
- ⭐⭐ **The interrogation questions must be real questions about real earlier sessions.** Ask the players about the Sylvan raid, about the ear tips, about the castle. ⚠️ **Their characters resist; the players remember.** That is the mechanism.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **The toy car is the adventure.** Play Iggy without a shred of irony — he is a frightened adult with a child's mind who has just watched somebody be cruel to strangers, and he decides on his own that it is wrong. ⚠️ **If the table is unkind to him, take that away and give them the flickering lights instead. Both routes work. Only one of them is worth anything.**
- ⭐ **Compassion is literally worth a Karma point**, and the players will not know that until afterwards.

3.4 · Eye of the Eagle

SOURCE

📕 ***Native American Nations, Volume 2*** (FASA #7209, SR2) — the adventure half; the rest of the book is the Tsimshian and Algonkian-Manitou gazetteer. Set around 2050, essentially campaign-present.

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⭐⭐ **Karma:** the bombs never reach the capital **+6** · Marta dead **+5** · the bombs safely destroyed **+4** · Sheemahant dead **+2** · the virus not removed from the lab by Blackwood **+2** · ⚠ the bombs detonate **−2** · ⚠⚠ **the bombs dumped overboard or the vessel sunk −1** · selling the virus **−1**.

⭐⭐⭐ **Read that penalty list carefully. Throwing the weapon into the sea is scored as a failure**, because the sea is part of what they were hired to protect.

WHAT HAPPENS

The Tsimshian Nation is run by two tribes and it grinds the other two underfoot. The Haida and Kwakiutl underclass produced a resistance that turned to terrorism, was crushed, and went back to spray-painting slogans. ⚠ The firebrands who could not accept that split off and formed something worse.

⚠⚠⚠ **And that splinter has allied with an eco-terrorist whose totem is Avenging and toxic. Marta** is a shaman of real power, and her objective is not political: she intends to **wipe out all human life in the region** as payment for what the government has done to the land. The Haida leader is under her influence and does not fully understand what he has agreed to.

They have a weapon because the United States left one behind. A secret bioweapons laboratory near Klawock, built before secession when the territory was Alaska, was never properly destroyed on the pullout. ⚠⚠ What was in it is called **Red Masque**, and the module describes it as *"an almost perfect war virus"* — aerosol transmission at effectively a hundred per cent, over ninety per cent lethal, attacking the central nervous system until the victim simply stops. ⚠ **It kills every mammal over forty kilos.** Days for a person. About twelve hours for an animal.

⭐ It has two mercies: it stops being contagious once it is in the bloodstream, and **sunlight destroys it** — twenty-four hours of daylight clears the air.

The plan is to put three of them on a passenger ferry and sail it into the capital's harbour.

⭐⭐⭐ **THE PATRON IS NOT A JOHNSON. SHE IS AN EAGLE.**

Farseer is a shapeshifter, and she meets them in their own Seattle bar looking like a silver-haired, golden-skinned woman with ⭐ *"the eyes of someone very much out of her element."* If assensed or challenged she admits what she is without much interest in the question.

⚠⚠ **And she does not understand the situation at all.** She cannot process government, insurrection or terrorism as concepts. What she knows is that a group of people is threatening **the land**, and that a dying Haida boy managed to gasp one word before he died. She cannot go to the authorities, because nobody would believe her.

She pays in **a gold nugget** and her personal word for ten times more. ⭐ And she may give them **Tael** — a pouch of owl feathers. Scatter them on the wind and a Great Form air spirit arrives and asks *"What would you have me do?"* ⚠⚠ **One use, once, and it is the module's own safety valve for a catastrophe.**

The prologue establishes exactly what kind of people the team is going after. The splinter group hits a power substation with missiles, and a young idealist raised on graffiti raids objects that *"human lives are never a small price."* ⚠ **Their field officer shoots him where he stands**, then fires the missiles anyway. Houses burn. The boy dies outside town, and something with the wingbeats of a great eagle finds him.

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Getting into the country is bleak comedy. It rains constantly, and the sign at the border reads ⭐ **"Land of Hope and Promise."** On the cliff road in, the terrorists blow a bridge to pieces directly in front of the team, which is either a driving test across a twenty-metre gap or a very long detour.

The town is the adventure's real texture. The underclass town is *"like a small, wet, depressing Seattle."* The police patrol in pairs and dislike Anglos and metahumans equally. The locals are poor, oppressed, and not pleased to see outsiders. ⭐ And the terrorists' bar is an eerie mirror of the team's own local back home — ⚠️ where the players must walk a line between showing respect and being read as weak.

⭐⭐ **Two design choices here are worth stealing.** The recruiter they can work is a man who **joined the movement and was told he was not front-line material**, and who is still aching to be a soldier of the revolution. And the group's voicemail system is ⚠️⚠️ **deliberately un-deckable** — isolated from the grid entirely, so a Computer test returns nothing but *it cannot be done*. **It runs on voice recognition.** Say an officer's first name to leave a message; say his password to hear his.

The middle of the run is being hunted. An eco-terror hit team times its attempt for when the runners are asleep in a hotel — a chromed specialist in arranging accidents, a manic shaman's son, and ⚠️⚠️ **identical twin pyromancer sisters, of whom the survivor will fight to the death to avenge the other.**

The laboratory is a genuinely unpleasant place. A deserted military base on a rocky island, thirty metres of elevator down, ⚠️ a **background count** on the whole site like a spiritual blight, and the smell of leaked gas that is harmless until somebody fires a gun near it.

⚠️⚠️ **And then the news reports a Dead Zone** — three kilometres near a river where every mammal is dead. ⭐ **That is her field test, and it worked.** On the tundra nearby, a thrill-gang on snowmobiles is riding around with red blotches, nosebleeds and falling hair, ⚠️ getting steadily more violent.

The climax is a ferry in a channel. Twenty disguised fighters have already taken the *Queen of the North* and killed her crew. A transfer boat is coming out to meet her carrying Marta, the Haida leadership, fifteen more men and ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **three viral bombs, each with a twenty-block radius.** Once loaded, two-hour timers, everyone off, and the ferry steers herself into the harbour.

> ✎ **THE SAFETY NET, AND IT IS ELEGANT — read this before you run the finale.**
>
> ⚠️⚠️ **If the team fails and the ferry reaches the city, the world does not end.** A Tsimshian shamanic secret society called the **Skinwalkers**, who wear headdresses of symbolically powerful animal skins, have been running their own investigation on their own intelligence, and they **magically neutralise the virus** before it can spread. The detonators still fire and damage the ship, and what sprays out is inert.
>
> ⭐⭐ **So a party wipe costs the runners their mission and their reputation — not tens of thousands of lives.** The module refuses to hold a genocide over the table as a threat it might actually have to deliver.
>
> ⭐ It also hands you a faction: a powerful native shaman society who were competent enough to solve this alone, and who now know who else was working the problem.

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WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A gold nugget and a promise**, ⚠ *unless* they stopped the plot by dumping the weapon into the sea or sinking the ferry — in which case **Farseer does not pay**, because the damage to the land is incalculable and she does not accept the distinction.
- ⚠⚠ **No credit whatsoever.** The Tsimshian government never acknowledges that any of this happened, and anyone who claims otherwise is charged with criminal rumour-mongering.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Leftover Red Masque cylinders**, which are now their problem. ☆ **A weapon of mass destruction in a team's possession, which a great many buyers would kill to obtain, is the real ending of this adventure.**
- ☆ **Tael**, if unspent — one Great Form air spirit, owed, in a pouch.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **The surplus virus**	☆ Open-ended and heavy. **What they do with it says more about the team than any Karma award**
☆ **Tael, unspent**	Any season; ⚠ a single Great Form air spirit is a campaign-altering favour
The Skinwalkers	A native shamanic society who now know their names
⚠ **Marta, if she lived**	Revenge, and she has already field-tested her method
☆☆ **Tsimshian's rotten foundations**	⚠⚠ **The nation collapses in 2064 — past the end of this series.** ☆ Leave it as unfinished business; the players will have seen exactly why, and will not be there when it happens

CROSSOVER — none, and one anti-conflation warning.

Eye of the Eagle is entirely Sixth World, and nothing in it is in the register.

⚠⚠ **Do not connect toxic shamanism to the Horrors.** A toxic Avenger is a corrupted totem relationship — a shaman whose rage at what was done to the land has turned her own patron poisonous. **It is not Horror-marking, it is not the Enemy, and it has no Fourth World counterpart in this campaign.**

☆ This is the same trap as Twilight in **2.2**: an evil, hungry, magically-powerful thing turns up and it is tempting to file it under the one cosmic horror the campaign has planned. **Every time you do that, the real reveal in 4.6 gets cheaper.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆ **Nothing structural, and that is fine — this is a standalone.** But it is the campaign's fourth Native American Nations episode after **1.3**, **1.5** and **3.1**, and the team's accumulated standing matters at every border and in every bar in this one.

⚠ A team that soured the Salish in Season One and then saved the Council in **3.1** has a complicated reputation in the NAN, and this module is a good place to let both halves of it show.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Play Farseer's incomprehension straight and do not make it whimsical.** She does not know what a government is. She knows a boy died in front of her and that something is coming for the land. ⚠ **Her briefing is nearly useless, and that is the point — the team has to do all of this from one word.**

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- ⭐⭐ **The voicemail cannot be decked, and the module means it.** Let the decker establish that firmly, then let the solution be a name spoken aloud in the right voice. **Some doors are social.**
- ⚠⚠ **Hold Tael back.** It is one Great Form air spirit and the module gives it as a rescue. ⭐ A team that never spends it should be allowed to keep it into Season Four.
- ⚠ **Do not let the sea be the easy answer.** If they dump the cylinders overboard it works, it saves the city, and **their employer refuses to pay and tells them why.**
- ⭐ **The infected gang on the snowmobiles is the scene that sells the weapon.** Red blotches, nosebleeds, hair coming out, and getting angrier. **That is what the harbour would have looked like.**

3.5 · Malpractice — bottle episode

SOURCE

📕 ***Missions*** (FASA), adventure 2 of 4. SR2, using *The Shadowrun Companion*'s alternate-campaign rules. Written for 2058.

⭐⭐⭐ **THE PLAYERS ARE DOCWAGON THIS EPISODE — a High Threat Response team.**

⚠ **One re-skin for 2055.** The book gets outsiders inside DocWagon through its **Temporary Response Personnel** programme, created in late 2057 after election violence sent demand through the roof. That programme does not exist yet. ⭐ **Replace it with an ordinary contract-security posting onto an HTR team** — everything else, including the equipment rules, is standing corporate policy and survives untouched.

⭐⭐ **Karma:** survival **1** · the Threat **2** · the mole exposed **1** · the mole captured **1** · ⭐⭐⭐ **one point for every five injured NON-CLIENTS saved alongside the clients** · ⚠⚠ **minus one, each, for every paramedic who dies through the runners' negligence.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **The Karma table encodes the entire frame: the game pays you for the people you were not required to save, and fines you for the ones you were.**

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐ **The book opens by explaining why this frame is worth playing**, and it is right:

> *"DocWagon is among the most **misunderstood** elements of Shadowrun. Most players and gamemasters think of a DocWagon team as a sort of **deus ex machina** that swoops in, grabs a severely injured customer and gets out fast. **What the DocWagon team actually has to deal with, blow by blow, rarely comes up.**"*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ *"In most adventures, the shadowrunners are hired to take out any opposition. If someone else goes down, so be it — their tough luck for getting in the way. **DocWagon works on a whole different level. DocWagon personnel are out there trying to save lives, usually risking their own to do it. There is no cease-fire in the shadows while the DocWagon team runs in to pick up a client.**"*

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> ✎ **THE EQUIPMENT RULE, AND IT IS THE BEST CONSTRAINT IN THE BOOK.**
>
> Everyone gains the **Registered Equipment** edge and draws from DocWagon's approved list, which ⚠ **contains only weapons that can fire gel or stun rounds.** Narcoject, tasers, shock gloves, net guns.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **And each person is issued exactly ONE round of real ammunition**, which is **confiscated when the team returns.** If it is fired, the shooter files a full account of the circumstances. ☆☆ **And if it hit somebody, the team must bring that person in for treatment as well as the client** — *"it's good PR, and great for the company lawyers."*
>
> ☆ There is **no restriction on cyberware at all**, provided it is registered.
>
> ☆☆☆ **Set beside 2.6, the two bottle episodes make a matched pair: Lone Star restricts your body, DocWagon restricts your ammunition.** Neither corporation trusts you, and each one distrusts a different part of you.

The employer is a man the corporation once put on magazine covers. He joined DocWagon as a paramedic in 2043 and built a reputation for dedication and heroism — ⚠⚠ **and collected regular fines and demerits from his own superiors for rescuing people who did not have contracts.** A network picked it up as a human-interest story, the rest of the media followed, and he spent a season being famous.

☆☆ *"Fifteen minutes of fame later, Bob was still a DocWagon paramedic"* — and then somebody killed his entire team.

⚠⚠⚠ **The prologue shows that ambush from the killer's side, and it is genuinely cold.** A man on the third floor of an unfinished office building with smartgoggles and a heavy rifle, running teams by radio: *"Team Panther and Team Gentry, you have yellow.* ***Team Equinox, activate sequence oh-five-niner Bravo.***"

> ☆☆ *"Equations burned through his head as he calculated and instinctively corrected for wind speed and distance. He took a deep breath and exhaled slowly,* ***reassured by the ice-cold logic and clarity of the numbers. 'Fire one.'***"

Two rockets. The ambulance rolls into a drainage ditch. *"Team Panther and Team Gentry,* ***you have green.***" Men come out from behind the construction equipment and fire into the wreck, ⚠ *"focusing their attack on the vehicle's exposed underside."* Then he picks up the heavy rifle.

The job is to find the mole. Somebody inside DocWagon has been selling **medical records and DNA samples** to whoever that was, and has been doing it for years. The team goes in undercover, attached to a response team, with two weeks to find hard proof.

☆☆ **The meet is staged for social discomfort and it is the best-written scene in the collection.** A family restaurant at midday. A small boy runs into a runner's leg and stares up at them — ☆ *"his eyes widen as he takes you all in, but he seems more* ***surprised*** *than frightened."* Then his mother pulls him behind her: *"I apologize for my son's rudeness. He is such a nuisance! Please forgive him,"* ⚠ *"trying to back away from you while keeping herself between you and her son. She departs swiftly, child in tow, and does not look back."*

⚠⚠ *"All around you men and women in suits stare furtively at you while pretending to ignore you."*

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⭐ Their contact is sitting in a booth behind enough food for a family, wearing a faded shirt that reads **"Sonics in 53!"**

Their trainer has forty-eight hours to do three weeks of work, and she is explicit about her exposure: ⚠⚠ *"One wrong move by the player characters and **she loses everything** — DocWagon's security, the chance to catch the mole, and probably her job as well."* Her brief is short: find hard proof, because without it her hands are tied — and ⚠⚠⚠ ***"The mole is no use to me dead. Scan me?"***

⚠ **And they must stay in character after they find him.** They are booked for the full fourteen-day shift and have to keep the cover up until they are transferred out.

THE SHIFT

⭐ **The clinic is** *"too white, too clean and smelling of the sick, injured and dead,"* with three wards colour-coded by service level.

⭐⭐ **Then the klaxon**, and the whole texture of the frame arrives in one paragraph: *"The paramedics drop what they're doing, grab their DocWagon jackets and hats, and charge through the door into the garage beyond. **You manage to grab most of your gear.** 'Hurry the frag up!'"*

The calls are the episode.

A client with head trauma in a firefight — ⚠ and the in-transit briefing is superb professional texture: her height, weight, allergies, registered cyberware, and then *"**Voiceprint didn't match her voice with the caller's**, but the caller reported that she'd suffered severe head trauma. I heard gunfire in the background."* On arrival: *"Gunfire's heavy. Powering cannon... Deviants engaged with Lone Star Security Services." — "Where's our client?" —* ⚠ ***"With the deviants."***

A warehouse full of loose cockatrii, which is comedy with a genuinely nasty clock. The caller climbed onto a crate because *"the last thing you want to do around our animals is run away — they're trained to chase and attack if you do."* ⚠⚠ And then: *"When we get ready to ship these birds, they're injected with a mild sedative... **Except I think it's starting to wear off. If they shake off the drug and see all these people lying around, I'm afraid they're going to start eating them.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **And then the exhaustion episode, which is the heart of it.** *"You've been going non-stop for days, and you're wiped... you smell like a wet sasquatch."* The book states its own purpose plainly:

> *"This encounter should convey **the real life of a DocWagon EMT. No sleep. Street violence never stops, and DocWagon paramedics are the only ones even trying to stanch the bleeding.**"*
>
> ⭐⭐ *"The player characters should feel punchy and on edge, with just a little glow of satisfaction at finally being **accepted** by Team Three. However, one of the team is a traitor and the player characters are the only ones who know that something dark is going on.* ⭐⭐⭐ ***Encourage their paranoia. Don't give them time to breathe, or the players time to think.***"

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⭐⭐⭐ THE MOLE, AND WHY HE IS THE BEST THING IN THE ADVENTURE

He is a long-serving employee, he is excellent at his job, and ⚠ *"he will **not** change his standard operating procedure when the player characters arrive, **because he has no reason to do so.**"* He has been stealing for years and nobody has ever questioned anything he does.

⚠⚠⚠ And he was recruited with a piece of blackmail that was never used: he is a dwarf who had cosmetic surgery to look human.

The man who runs him did a thorough background check first, found it, ⭐ **and led with a diplomatic approach anyway, holding the secret in reserve.** So the traitor inside a corporation that trades in DNA records is a metahuman passing as human, being handled by someone who knew that before they ever spoke.

The last call is the first one again. A thirteen-year-old elven boy with a Platinum contract, injured at a construction site — vague details, low blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat, probably a fall. ⭐ *"Going out one person short makes you feel a little naked, a bit off your game. But you'll only have to deal with a small child, not a gang war —* ⚠⚠ ***looks like for once you've gotten an easy call.***"

The gates are wide open. The building frames stand *"like giant metal teeth."* And beyond the fence there is a wide drainage ditch.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **Their fee, a fake SIN with two weeks of legitimate wages on it, and the equipment.**
- ⚠⚠ **An enemy they never met.** ⭐ The book is candid that *"most likely, the player characters will finish the adventure **without ever meeting Brown**,"* and recommends it as a model: *"the very essence of a good Enemy."*
- ⭐⭐ **An employer with a crusade**, who asks them who they think is behind it, shares what he has, and *"intends to go after the bad guys with every resource at his disposal."*
- ⚠ **And three questions the book deliberately refuses to answer:** what the stolen DNA was for, who the man behind it is, and ⭐⭐ ***"might he actually be doing good?"***

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐ **An unknown, competent, well-funded enemy who never appears**	Any season; ⭐ the module is explicitly designed as a tutorial in running one
⚠⚠ **Stolen DNA samples and medical records, purpose unknown**	Open. ⭐ **Genuinely sinister next to 3.2**, where a corporation was breeding people from harvested genetic material
A DocWagon crusader with money and a grievance	⭐ A recurring patron who hires for moral reasons rather than corporate ones
⭐ **The team's own DocWagon contracts**	⚠ They now know exactly what happens on the other end of that call

CROSSOVER — none, and none should be added. A bottle episode, like **2.6**. ⭐ What it contributes to the long game is a second working corporation seen from inside: after this the players have been Lone Star and they have been DocWagon, and **they have watched both institutions be decent, underfunded and compromised at the same time.**

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PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐ **2.6, structurally — and running the two as a matched pair is the point.** Both bottle episodes put the players inside an institution that is trying to do its job with its hands tied, both restrict them in a way that defines the frame, and ⚠️ **both end with the corporation protecting itself.**

⭐ **And 3.2, thematically.** Three episodes ago they read internal memos about breeding people from harvested genetic material. **Here somebody is quietly selling DNA samples out of an ambulance service and nobody knows what for.** The module never connects them. ⚠️⚠️ **Neither should you** — but a player who does has noticed something real about this world.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **The one real round is the whole frame — enforce it completely.** The confiscation, the written account, ⭐ and above all the rule that **anyone they shoot with it must be treated and transported alongside the client.** That single sentence changes how a table plans every encounter.
- ⭐⭐ **Reward saving non-clients and say nothing about it.** One Karma for every five people they were not paid to save. ⚠️ **Their employer was fined for exactly this**, and the scoring quietly takes his side.
- ⚠️⚠️ **The mole must be taken alive.** Kill him and there is no award for exposing him, and ⭐ unless the table can stage a genuinely plausible accident — *"a lot harder than it may sound"* — **a murder charge lands on them later.**
- ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Leaving early has a body count.** A team that identifies the mole and walks breaks its contract, is paid five thousand, and ⭐ **the replacement crew walks into the final ambush and is slaughtered.** The book assigns a Karma penalty *"because it is their fault."*
- ⭐⭐ **Failure is survivable and the module says so.** If they never find him they finish the shift, keep the SIN and the pay — and ⭐ **because personnel are cycled between teams, they can try again in six weeks without arousing suspicion.**

3.6 · Eye Witness

SOURCE

📕 ***Eye Witness*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition. *Grimoire II* and *Virtual Realities* are useful, not required.

⭐ **Written for 2055, which is exactly where Season Three sits.** Nothing to re-date.

⭐⭐⭐ **Karma:** the complete blueprint set delivered to the client **+6** · ⭐⭐⭐ **the client and the ghoul-lord reach a deal instead — +8** · clearing the office block of bystanders and defusing the bomb **+1**.

⚠️⚠️ **Read those two numbers together. The peaceful resolution is worth more than the successful one, and that is the adventure's entire argument.**

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WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐ **This is a whistleblower noir that turns into a story about who counts as a person**, and the plot is a chain of custody that no one in it understands.

A quality inspector at **Multitech** discovers that the optical chip in a new military-grade cyberdeck has been **deliberately sabotaged** — a rerouting that skips expensive manufacturing and cuts programming time, producing a knowingly inferior product. ⭐ He photographs every incriminating blueprint with his camera cybereye. Then the corporation runs his car off a cloverleaf, and his body goes into the sewers, ⚠️ **where ghouls eat most of it.**

The cybereye survives. A ganger scavenges it on a ghoul hunt and sells it to a fence, who pulls exactly one image out of its short-term memory and sends the print to a freelance analyst to be read. The analyst works out what it means, confronts the chip's designer — ⚠️ **and is shot by a sniper the same night.**

⭐ **But he posted a letter first**, to his sister.

⭐⭐ **She hires the team, and she does something almost no Johnson in this campaign does: she tells the whole truth.** The meet is in a funeral parlour — caskets, guards with shotguns, the smell of preservative — and her pitch is completely straight, because she is grieving and she needs them to trust her. Her brother was killed last night. He sent her a letter, a blueprint and a business card. She thinks Multitech did it, and she wants them destroyed.

⚠️ She pays well, negotiates shrewdly, refuses to show desperation, ⭐ **and becomes a genuine long-term ally if she is treated decently.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE PROOF IS IN TWO PIECES AND NEITHER IS ANY USE ALONE.** Most of the blueprints are on a memory chip still inside the **protected cavity of the dead man's half-eaten skull.** The one that matters — the final chip — is the single image that stayed in the eye. ⚠️ Whoever assembles the set can destroy Multitech or blackmail it.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **And a third party is collecting.** A multimillionaire who goblinised into a ghoul runs a hidden haven for others like him, funded through a waste-disposal firm and supplied with bodies by a corrupt corpse-warehouse. **He wants the blueprints to blackmail his way onto Multitech's board** — a seat, and with it protection for his people — and he has hired a notorious runner to hunt down the gangers who found the eye.

THE TRAIL

The dead analyst's laboratory is a small room in a seedy office block, and going through it is genuinely sad — a lonely man's effects, mementos, and a faux-personality chatter program he built himself for company. ⚠️⚠️ **His system is isolated and not on the grid at all**, which the module flags as a trap: *"a decker who scouts ahead makes a mistake here."* ⭐ Also on it is an unfinished program that could be completed into an attack utility that **cripples any deck using the flawed chip** — a serious side-prize.

The murder scene is a Lone Star cordon, and the detective running it is competent, respected and privately certain it was a corporate hit. ⚠️⚠️ **The Star is only working it hard because the victim looked almost identical to a cousin of the Mayor who was a block away**, and the Mayor's office is frightened the cousin was the real target. ⭐ The forensics are lovely: explosive rounds from a rooftop, a thermographic footprint-shadow — and **the shells of seeds the sniper ate while he waited**, which carry saliva.

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The designer's house is a killbox. Multitech has already flown the real man to Shanghai and installed a ringer with a voice modulator who ⚠ **interviews visitors at length before springing a CCTV-coordinated ambush** of troubleshooters, snipers and combat mages.

The gangers are terrified and lying low, because the man who found the eye was ⚠ **tortured to death hours earlier.** ☆ They will talk if given respect; strong-arming them earns *"a bullet in the temple."*

☆☆ **And his girlfriend is the saddest scene in the book.** When she heard he was dead, she spliced a holiday recording of the two of them into a **continuous loop, disabled her deck's safety cutoffs, and tuned out.** She has been under for forty-eight hours without sleep, food or water. ⚠ **Reviving her may kill her**, and her guardian animal will not let anyone near.

The sewers are deliberately unmapped — *"chaos incarnate"* — and the module tells the players to mark their route with something that will not wash off. ☆ Down there are the **Lost Boys**, feral children who are curious rather than hostile and *"more interested in scaring the runners off than fighting,"* and who will take a team that talks to them decently to see their Teacher.

> **✎ THE TEACHER — the strangest thing in this adventure, and the module refuses to explain it.**
>
> He was a groundbreaking astral researcher whose work **"provided much of the basis for modern magical theory."** Intrigued that magicians cannot leave the earth's biosphere without severe consequences, he set out to *"test and if possible transcend this limitation,"* believing the ones who had died or burned out trying were merely novices. He ran **"Experiment 231": the first attempt to travel astrally beyond the biosphere under controlled conditions.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Whatever he found out there frightened him so completely that on waking he gouged out his own eyes with his bare hands.** *"To this day, no one knows what he saw that prompted this act of self-mutilation."* He fled into the sewers. He refused vat-grown eyes, because **he had no intention of seeing it again** — and without sight he cannot work magic at all, and does not want to. He carries an abiding dread that *"the open sky wanted to swallow him."*
>
> His chamber walls are covered in drawings: *"executed in different media from pencil sketches scrawled on scraps of paper to massive images painted on the concrete. **All primitive, the drawings depict a reptilian face surrounded by a nimbus of stars.**"*
>
> ☆☆☆ **HOW TO RUN IT IS NOT A JUDGEMENT CALL — the book instructs you.** Asked about the drawings or why he hides, *"Alegheri evades the question and starts taking the drawings down. If the runners press the issue, he becomes agitated and may refuse to speak further with them, asking Abbott to see them out."* And the module states it outright: *"**he says nothing about the drawings or his past during the course of this adventure.** For the purposes of this adventure, Alegheri can only point the runners toward the ghouls' hunting ground."*
>
> ☆☆ **So: show it, explain nothing, and let no NPC interpret it.** That is the text, not a preference.
>
> ☆☆☆ **AND THE BOOK LEAVES THE DOOR OPEN ITSELF.** *"If one or more of the runners decides to visit the sewers regularly and befriend the blind mage, **Alegheri may one day confide in them**."* Whatever he eventually says is therefore **earned by a relationship, not delivered by a scene** — which is the right shape for it, and costs nothing to leave hanging for four seasons.

> ⚠ **The one thing still open is what he confides**, and that remains the author's call: a blind man in a sewer who went looking outside the world and came back insane, in a campaign whose Season Four antagonists come from outside the world. ⚠⚠ **Nothing needs deciding now** — running it as written preserves every option, including deciding he saw nothing that matters.

☆☆☆ **AND THEN THE ADVENTURE ASKS ITS QUESTION.** Past a tunnel scorched by flamethrowers — the site of the massacre the ghoul-lord is avenging — the team's search is interrupted by **seven feral ghouls: three adult females, and children between five months and ten years old.** The children scream. The adults move between them and the runners.

The module's instruction to the gamemaster is the best sentence in it:

> ☆☆☆ *"Use the baby to drive the point home: ghoul or not,* ***it is a young, innocent life cursed with its parents' genetic disease — its nature is not its fault.***"

The corpse-warehouse is where the paperwork lives — a stone crypt-pyramid whose director has been quietly selling fresh bodies to a shell company for fifty thousand a time, because he is facing bankruptcy. ⚠ He is guilt-ridden, and he confesses and cooperates the moment he is confronted. **One tomb in three is empty.** ⚠⚠ And something else lives there: a **free tomb spirit** of enormous power, with Essence Drain, a petrifying gaze and immunity to ordinary weapons.

☆ **The rival runner meets them in a goth club** built into a mock-gothic church, with casket lids for tables, run by a frustrated actor who spread a rumour that he is a real vampire — ⚠ *"no real vampire would be caught here."* He arrives **alone and unarmed**, admits his employer's interests run parallel to theirs, and offers up to fifty thousand for their copy of the print. It usually ends in an impasse and a courteous parting.

☆☆☆ THE FORK

The blueprints they need are held by the ghoul-lord, and he will not give them up unless his people are threatened.

His compound is defended by twelve armed, sane ghouls, an enlightened ghoul mage who is his most loyal follower and his heir, ⚠ two bodyguards who have been **sedated and fitted with skillwires so they fight on reflex** — *"meat puppets"* engineered around the nerve damage goblinisation caused them — and **thirty feral ghouls who are released if the place is attacked in force.**

☆ **So the team can take the plans by killing a community**, and hand them to a grieving woman who will use them to destroy a corporation.

☆☆☆ **Or they can put the two of them in a room.** She wants Multitech ruined. He wants a seat on its board and safety for his people. **Those are not incompatible**, and the Karma table pays two extra points to whoever works that out.

⚠⚠ **And if they simply side with the ghoul-lord and hand him the prints, she hunts them** — blacklisted, and it is time to leave town.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆ **A client who is either a permanent ally or a permanent enemy**, decided by what they do at the end.
- ⚠ **No public justice whatsoever.** ☆ If she gets the plans she destroys Multitech **privately, and the runners are not part of it.** Nobody is arrested. There is no story on the news.

- ⭐ **An attack program** that cripples any cyberdeck built around the flawed chip, if they finished it.
- ⚠⚠ **And whatever they did in that sewer**, which the table will remember longer than the fee.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐ **A hidden ghoul community, and a ghoul on a megacorporate board** if the deal was struck	⭐ Open-ended and excellent — **a metahuman-rights thread with an actual power base behind it**
Multitech's other crimes, recoverable from its own system	Blackmail material, any season
⚠ **A free tomb spirit**	A standing hazard with a name
⭐ **The client, as an ally**	⚠ A well-connected street samurai who now owes them her brother

> **CROSSOVER — none in the register, and nothing should be invented.** ⚠ See the boxed note above for the one genuinely tempting hook and why it stays unresolved until you rule on it.
>
> ⭐⭐ **What this episode does contribute is the campaign's metahuman-rights spine, third beat.** In **2.7** the players learned that unwanted goblinised children are collected and raised as assassins. In **3.2** they read an internal memo describing orks as *"lost children"* — and another describing them as raw material. **Here they are asked to decide whether a five-month-old ghoul is a person.**
>
> ⚠ Nobody in the campaign will ever make that argument out loud to them. **The adventures just keep putting it in front of them.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐ **2.11, inverted, and it is worth pointing out to nobody.** In *Missing Blood* the team learned a devastating corporate truth **and could not publish it** — every channel was owned, and the one person they told joined the cult.

Here they assemble proof of a corporate crime and it does get used. ⚠ Not by a court, not by a newsfeed — by a private citizen, illegally, for revenge, while the team stands outside. ⭐ **Two seasons apart, the campaign has now shown them both ways that the truth fails to become justice in this world.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐ **Let them notice the Johnson is honest.** After eighteen episodes of being lied to, a grieving woman who simply explains the situation is genuinely disorienting. ⚠ **Do not add a twist. There isn't one.**
- ⚠⚠ **The analyst's system is off the grid.** A decker who "scouts ahead" finds nothing and wastes the session's best lead. **Let that happen, then let them walk in physically.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the ghoul family exactly as written and do not editorialise afterwards.** Three mothers, four children, and the youngest is five months old. **Whatever the players do, say nothing about it.**
- ⭐⭐ **Signal that the deal is possible without proposing it.** Let the ghoul-lord explain what he actually wants — a board seat, and his people left alone — and let the client say what she

wants, which is Multitech in ruins. ⚠ **Two extra Karma is the reward for a player noticing those do not conflict.**

- ⚠ **Her revenge happens off-screen.** She takes the plans, she pays, and she does it without them. ☆ **A campaign where the players are not present for the payoff of their own work is telling them something true about the shadows.**

3.7 · Paradise Lost — SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Paradise Lost*** (FASA, SR2E) — native second edition, using *Grimoire II*, the *Rigger Black Book* and reprinted security rules. ☆ **It also contains a Kingdom of Hawai'i sourcebook section**, which is where the campaign's Hawai'i material comes from.

☆ **Written for 2055 — exactly Season Three.** No re-dating.

⚠ **A seven-day clock.** Miss it and the dragon sells the prize to Fuchi.

☆☆ **Karma:** avoiding a fight at the restaurant **+1** · locating the terrorists' headquarters **+6** · the prototype **+5** · the backups **+8** · ☆☆☆ **cutting a deal with the dragon +12** · ☆☆☆ **escaping or defeating him while holding the device +20.** Individual awards are **doubled** for guts.

WHAT HAPPENS

☆☆ **The prize is the best-conceived piece of technology in the knowledge base.**

The **Anti-Flatlining Device** lets a decker **survive black IC** — the lethal biofeedback that normally kills a jacked-in runner outright. ☆☆☆ **And it was discovered by accident, by a mediocre elf decker who ran into experimental black IC in 2051 and lived only because a worn-out, obsolete signal modifier in his rig short-circuited the feedback loop.** The effect came from **how his failing components malfunctioned**, not from anything the component was designed to do.

⚠ Two corporations then spent a year — and his life — reverse-engineering a manufacturable version of a fault.

☆ **Mechanically it is beautifully limited.** It converts the physical damage into stun, though the decker still *believes* it is killing him, and dumps him out once the damage is serious — a terrible scare, dump shock, and alive. ⚠⚠ **And it destroys itself.** The first time it saves someone there is a real chance the circuits simply slag, and every subsequent save makes that likelier. **An AFD works a couple of times.** Which is exactly why it is not a product yet, and why every megacorporation on earth wants the manufacturable design rather than the device.

The chain of betrayal is four deep. A mid-sized food corporation diversifying into Matrix technology partnered with an isolated Hawai'ian research firm. ⚠ The research firm secretly sold the working prototype to Mitsuhama. ⚠⚠ Mitsuhama then massacred a joint meeting in Honolulu and raided the island laboratory to collect it — ⚠⚠⚠ **and the leader of that assault team was a double agent for a Polynesian independence movement whose leader is a feathered-serpent great dragon.**

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So the dragon rose out of the sea and drowned the entire Mitsuhama team as they left, took the device, and hid it in a canyon. His agent told Mitsuhama that a kraken had sunk the boat and the prototype was lost.

⭐ **The food corporation's president does not believe her partner's promise to handle it, and hires the runners herself.**

⚠⚠ **The prologue establishes what they are walking toward, before the plot starts.** The dragon mind-sifts a captive scientist for every secret of the device, and then **crushes and swallows him** — *"a human might step on a beetle."*

THE ISLANDS

The invitation is flattering and specific, delivered by an immaculately pinstriped troll messenger who is a nightclub bouncer doing a paid errand and has no idea who the client is. **The meet is in a deluxe restaurant** with a magnetic-anomaly staircase, twelve concealed guards, police on call and astral security overhead — ⭐ and the Johnson is the corporation's own president, running it herself, incognito.

⭐⭐ **Not fighting anybody in that restaurant is worth a Karma point**, which tells the players what kind of adventure this is before they leave the table.

In Honolulu the corporation's entire local intelligence apparatus is a bellboy — a scrappy youth with a smuggling sideline and the recognition phrase *"Greetings from Auntie June."* ⭐ He builds them a tourist-day cover: brunch, a pineapple plantation, the museum, the beach, a studio tour, and a luau where a contact will hand over the break-in kit.

⭐ **That contact is being chased across the luau by four gangers when they find her**, and they have five combat turns to get her out. She sells them a passcard and floor plans for twenty-five hundred.

⚠⚠ **The office break-in has a lovely piece of security design:** the building's systems are **deliberately isolated from the Matrix so they cannot be hacked from outside the building** — and the research firm runs additional subsystems its own landlord does not control. ⭐⭐ **The data that matters is on an off-grid research system**, which is now the second episode running where a decker who scouts remotely finds nothing.

⚠ And the same night, a squad from the movement is in the same office hunting the same files, having strung **a monowire whip across the doorway.**

On the island, the team arrives just in time to watch three Mitsuhama soldiers prepare to execute the double agent — his employers got uneasy about the kraken story and sent people to close the loop. ⭐⭐ Then a night boat chase across reefs, ⚠ **and a real kraken lives in these waters**, drawn by the lights and the explosions.

⭐⭐⭐ **The cover story was a lie, and the lie is in the water with them, and it can be steered onto the pursuers.**

The headquarters is a two-level cave complex behind a rock outcropping in a canyon, with a camouflaged landing pad fifty metres up the wall and a medicine lodge on top holding shamans of a totem the book invents for this setting. ⭐ The bellboy insists on flying them in himself — and unnervingly, if nobody in the team can hide the approach, **he can.**

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☆☆☆ THE DRAGON

The device is in an autonomous research area, jacked into a brand-new deck with a technician testing it. ⚠⚠ **The backups and the spare prototypes are in the lair** — a cavern masked to look like solid mountainside by an illusion that opens when it senses its owner, maintained by a bound elemental. ☆ The backup chip is hidden among entertainment media, labelled **"Honeydew."**

And then thirty metres of feathered serpent comes home.

⚠⚠⚠ **The module gives three options and is contemptuous of one of them.** They can **fight**, which is near-certain death — *"how stupid must you be to fight an angry dracoform?"* They can **run**, which is three consecutive desperate tests to dodge past him and leap for a hovering helicopter.

☆☆☆ **Or they can talk, and he will deal, because his interest in the device is purely commercial.** It is a revenue stream for his movement, nothing more. He offers **a joint venture to bring it to market**, opening at half of net sales and open to negotiation, ⚠ on one condition: **they never say a word about his organisation.** *"No place on earth can hide you"* if they do — though privately he does not care about them much, and is already relocating from a site he now considers compromised.

☆ Then he shifts into human shape and drafts a letter of agreement.

⚠⚠ **And if they fail, the consequence is the nastiest piece of corporate logic in the campaign.** He sells the device to Fuchi for ten million. ☆☆ **Fuchi then floods the market with them while quietly developing black IC that defeats them** — about three months — **and sells that too.** *"Good biz."* Every device already sold becomes worthless, and the deckers who trusted their lives to one die on the wire.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A business relationship with a great dragon**, if they negotiated — a signed letter of agreement, a percentage, and a standing obligation of silence.
- ⚠ **Or the device and a great dragon who knows their faces**, if they ran with it. **Worth eight more Karma and considerably more trouble.**
- ☆ **Fame and money**, and possibly an unmarked package containing five finished devices, delivered to whichever of them decks.
- ⚠⚠ **And silence as a permanent condition.** Two organisations hunt them if they ever discuss what they saw in that canyon.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **A great dragon treated as a counterparty rather than a monster**	**Season 8.** ⚠ This is the first time the team negotiates with one, and the Rite of Succession is nothing but that, eight times over
☆☆ **Fuchi's countermeasure programme**	**Seasons 6–7** — ☆ the corporation is already in the habit of selling both the shield and the sword
The dragon behind their dragon	**Season 8** — see the crossover box
⚠ **A signed agreement with a terrorist organisation**	Any season; ☆ the team is now a business partner of an insurgency
The Kingdom of Hawai'i	A Pacific foothold, and a sourcebook's worth of setting

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> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND THE INTERESTING ONE IS NOT THE DRAGON IN THE ROOM.**

The serpent they meet is a **vassal**. His master is **Ryumyo** — ☆☆☆ **and Ryumyo is RI MAO**, Luung's banished rebel apprentice, exiled east for it.

☆☆ **What that buys you:** the power behind this adventure is not merely ancient and dangerous. **He is somebody's expelled student, and he has had six thousand years to decide he was right.** ⚠ **Play the grudge, never the history.** An organisation run at one remove by a dragon with something to prove behaves differently from one run by a dragon who simply wants money — it is pettier, more patient, and more interested in being seen to succeed.

⚠⚠⚠ **Never stated at either table.**

☆ **And a discipline note the register makes explicitly here:** Hualpa, the other feathered serpent, has **no Fourth World identity and should not be given one.** *"Resist the urge to give every great dragon a Fourth World name — the roster is deliberately short, and an unassigned dragon is not a gap."*

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE DRAGON LADDER, AND SEASON THREE IS THE RUNG THAT CHANGES ITS NATURE.**

Where	The dragon
1.3	One they never see, whose agent hires them for an errand
2.1	One who arrives to save a friend, loses him, and vanishes grieving
2.5	A great dragon who **uses** them, tells them so, and does not ask
3.7 *(here)*	☆☆☆ **A great dragon who negotiates, concedes points, and signs something**

⚠⚠ In three seasons they have gone from doing a dragon's errand without knowing it to sitting across from one and haggling over a percentage. ☆ **Season 8 asks them to do that with eight of them at once, with the world as the stake.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Show them the prologue's cruelty and then make them negotiate with it.** The dragon eats a man in the opening fiction. Twenty pages later he is drafting a contract. **Both are him, and neither is an act.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let them fight him.** The module says what it thinks of that plan; ☆ if a table commits anyway, let the flee option stay open right up until somebody fires.
- ☆☆ **Reward the restaurant.** A Karma point for not starting a fight, in the first scene, is the module telling the players how to play the next six days. **Say nothing and award it visibly.**
- ☆ **The off-grid systems are a pattern now.** Second episode running where remote decking finds nothing and the answer is to physically walk in. **Let the decker be frustrated; it is the point.**
- ⚠ **The kraken is real.** The cover story invented to explain the theft turns out to be true, and it is swimming toward them. ☆ **Let a player realise that out loud.**

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SEASON THREE — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

⭐ **The third ledger.**

Planted	Where	Collected
⭐⭐⭐ **The Harlequin jobs are one job, aimed at one man — and they have his name**	3.3	**4.5**, and all of Season 4
Karl Brackhaven, chapter head, paid them	3.1	**Season 5**
Ehran's face, and a Tír commcode that expired	3.3	**Season 4**
Alamos 20,000 knows them	3.2	Any season
Wilhelm Park trusts them (or does not)	3.2	Standing
Surplus Red Masque cylinders	3.4	⚠ **Open, and heavy**
Tael, one Great Form air spirit, unspent	3.4	Any season
Stolen DNA and medical records, purpose unknown	3.5	⚠ Open
A ghoul on a corporate board, possibly	3.6	Open
Fuchi sells the shield and then the sword	3.7	**Seasons 6–7**
Ryumyo, one step behind the dragon they met	3.7	**Season 8**
⭐ **Alegheri, and Experiment 231**	3.6	⭐⭐ **Run unexplained — the module says so in as many words.** The book's own hook is that a team who keeps visiting him *"may one day"* be confided in; ⚠ **what he confides is still the author's call, and nothing needs deciding to run it**

⚠⚠ **And the season's inheritance is a name.** They know the strange jobs were one job. They know it was aimed at Ehran the Scribe. ⭐⭐⭐ **They do not know who has been moving them, and Season Four is nothing but the answer to that question.**

SEASON FOUR · The Long Con of History

2056. Veteran band, 60–90 Karma.

⭐⭐⭐ **The immortal-elf arc has been background noise since episode 1.4. This season it becomes the show.**

Everything the team half-noticed converges: the genealogy file with one deleted record, the quill pen in a glass case, the policlub war they started, the idol nobody would explain, the two portraits two centuries apart, and the name a torturer made them say out loud. ⚠️ They already know the jobs were one job. **They do not know whose.**

Six episodes, four of them Harlequin chapters — because the interleaved thread finally stops being an interleave and becomes the spine. ⚠️⚠️ And the season ends with the sequel, run as an unbreakable block, in which they are told what the Enemy is.

4.1 · Harlequin, chapter 6 — SPIRITUAL

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305), mini-adventure 6 of 8. ⚠️ Requires ***The Grimoire***. Thread rules at **1.4**; the previous beat was **3.3**.

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · achieving the mission goals **3** · ⭐⭐ **causing no casualties on the plantation 1.**

Pay: 150,000 nuyen each, ten per cent up front, ⭐ with a ten per cent bonus for a clean run — which the fixer offers while observing *"fat chance of that."*

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **Open with the journal, because it is the softest thing in the entire feud.**

> *"I have sent them against him once more, this time to a place from which I do not expect them to return.* ***Amazonia.*** *A surprising destination for such people as this. Is this their work? Their desire? Or does one of us inflict ourselves upon them?* ⚠️⚠️ ***Is it my dear once-brother?*** *His influence in that area is certain, but the concerns are not his. Unless he's changed... Has he changed? The words he writes reveal the same arrogance, as do his actions with the youth-minds he oversees. His voice in that obscene nation-state is heard clearly, yet it is tempered by age.*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ ***And he has learned to love flowers since last we met.***"

The target is a plantation near the source of the Amazon, and it is the one place in the world the man goes to stop being himself. He tends orchids there. ⚠️ *"By striking at Ehran in his Amazonian sanctuary, Harlequin hopes to show that* ***no part of him — not even his most reclusive, introspective aspect — is safe.****"*

⭐⭐ **And there is a second reason for the job that the players will never guess:** *"He also wants to find out how Ariel's treatment has affected them.* ⚠️⚠️⚠️ ***He's tempted to reveal the Ehran connection in all its glory, but is afraid they'll seek their own primitive form of***

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chal'han. *If the runners survive and achieve the goal Harlequin has set for them,* ***he'll be even more tempted to take them into his confidence.****"*

⭐ **This chapter is an audition.** He is deciding whether to tell them.

The fixer is honest and expensive. *"If he says the price is right, it's likely to be quite a mountain of nuyen. On the other hand, if he says the job is 'unusual,' you'll likely earn every cent."* He runs the meet aboard a private jet he has just bought, because *"it's so private up here."* ⚠️ He will not discuss his employer at all, and the module is clear that he genuinely does not know.

⭐⭐ **The job is to cut one flower — and to leave a datachip in the place where it stood.** *"It may seem odd, but my instructions about this were very specific."*

⚠️⚠️ **That chip holds a single line of code**, and a day's analysis against the material they stole from the policlub in **2.8** reveals that it **matches the back-door subroutine** — ⭐ and, exactly like the subroutine, **it is useless on its own.**

THE JOURNEY IS HALF THE EPISODE

⭐⭐ **The route out is a chain of increasingly disreputable transport, and every link has a person in it worth playing.** A jet over the Native American Nations — ⚠️ *"some of the Nations have been known to routinely shoot down any unidentified aircraft on the assumption that they are smugglers. Definitely an ignominious way to go."* An island strip and a handler in white-and-tan island clothes ⭐ *"speaking with a decidedly out-of-place* ***Boston accent****."* A seaplane, an oil tanker, and hidden in its hold **an old Soviet stealth transport flown by "a rigger with cold silver eyes."**

⚠️ *"Once the VTOL grounds, you'll have only a couple of* ***seconds*** *to get out and clear. Those Amazonians are real touchy about their border security, and they don't rely exclusively on radar."*

Then **ten days upriver on the ugliest boat any of them has ever seen** — an ancient tug with a retrofitted electric engine, ⭐ whose only two concessions to electronics are a shortwave radio and **a generator that keeps the insects off.**

⭐⭐ **And the setting detail that sells Amazonia in one image:** the Awakened government runs regular, powerful rituals to force the rain forest to regrow, and it is winning. Towns show burn scars and heavy cutting where the jungle keeps coming back. ⚠️⚠️ **Every morning the inhabitants have to cut their vehicles free of the plants that grew over them during the night.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE BEST NPC IN THE CHAPTER IS COMPLETELY INNOCENT.** The elderly British bush pilot who will fly them out over six hundred kilometres of nothing spends the evening before asking **pointed, probing, uncomfortably specific questions** until the players are certain he works for somebody.

> ***"Greene is not a counteragent, however. He is simply a lonely old European, living out his last years in a backwater region of what he still calls Brazil... simply trying to recapture some of that excitement by talking with the runners. If his questions seem especially pointed, it is because of the sharpness of his mind."***

⚠️ The instruction is to make them uneasy *"but not so suspicious that they decide to cancel their trip with him."*

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Then the river, and the walk. ⭐ *"You're city people, used to the flash and flair of the streets, not to the slow ebb and flow of nature's rhythms. And here you are, facing five days of sunburn and hard rowing, with mosquitoes for sleeping companions."* A hundred and forty-four kilometres by canoe over four and a half days, and the last sixteen on foot — ⭐ by which point the packs are lighter, because most of the food is gone.

⭐⭐ TWO PEOPLES, AND HARLEQUIN GOT THERE FIRST

One tribe helps them, and it is not luck. ⚠⚠ ***"Harlequin contacted the Amahuacas and instructed them to watch the river for the arrival of the team and to aid its members in any way possible*** *— short of participating in the run on the plantation."* Food, medicine, advice on what to eat and what not to touch, and warriors shadowing them at a distance listening for trouble.

⭐⭐⭐ **And they have stories about a previous visitor.** Their shaman has spoken with him recently, and the tribe tells tales of ⭐ **"the Laughing One."** ⚠ *"The shaman will say nothing about 'the Laughing One,' and in fact, eventually* ***denies even mentioning those words.***"

⚠ Asked about the plantation, they will say only that **a great demon-spirit lives there.**

The other tribe takes heads, and their theology is the reason. They honour great killers — men with *"livers of stone"* — but believe a victim's soul will rise and destroy its killer unless it is contained. ⚠⚠ So within hours of a death **the eyes, ears, nostrils and lips are sewn shut**, the skull crushed, and the head tanned until it shrinks to the size of a fist. ⚠ They are also *"great bluffers, often allowing victims to believe that all has been resolved through an amiable understanding, then* ***murdering them when they are off-guard.***"

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE STORY OF HOW EHRAN BECAME THEIR GOD IS THE FINEST PIECE OF CHARACTERISATION IN THE WHOLE CAMPAIGN.

He walked through their territory once. They fed him, entertained him, and then attacked him in his sleep — ⚠ **and he had heard about them and was ready, and killed eight of their best warriors** before the rest withdrew.

Then, knowing nothing of their beliefs, **he left the bodies lying where they fell for two days**, waiting politely for the tribe to come and collect their dead. When nobody came, and the smell became intolerable, **he dug graves and buried them himself.**

⚠⚠⚠ ***"The Jívaros, watching from the forest, interpreted Ehran's actions as a calculated unconcern for the vengeance of the dead. When he failed to sicken and die, they returned and worshipped him as the avatar of some warrior god."***

⭐⭐ **He became a god by accident, through an ordinary courtesy that happened to be a blasphemy, and he still has no idea why.** He then ordered half a dozen tribes to move east around his estate and to let no one approach it overland.

THE RUN, AND THE PART AFTER THE RUN

⭐ **The plantation itself is easy and the module says so.** A clearing behind an electrified fence, ⚠ **no locks on any door in any building**, a fifty-fifty chance of one gardener who *"will offer no resistance"* — and a **barghest asleep in the foliage** that may notice them first and howl.

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⚠ There is more security than there should be, because their target has been under attack for four seasons and has reinforced everywhere. ☆ Which produces the module's driest suggestion: *"If the shadowrunners have any sense, they will change plans and **steal the militarised helicopter** instead of the light aircraft to make their exit."*

☆☆☆ **And in an upstairs study there is a painting.**

> ***"Of special interest in the house is a painting of Ehran that hangs in an upper-floor study. It is the original of the hologram that Ariel has in her room in the Counterstroke segment."***

⚠ Nobody points at it. The players either recognise it from three episodes ago or they do not.

⚠⚠⚠ **THE REAL CLIMAX IS AFTER THEY THINK THEY HAVE WON.** *"At this point, the referee should let the players believe that they are home free. As they begin congratulating themselves, he can spring the next surprise on them."*

While the team was busy in the greenhouse, **the headhunters' shaman was conjuring a storm spirit**, and it is now between them and anywhere. The sky goes black, the aircraft bucks, a flash of lightning kills every instrument including the autopilot, ⚠⚠ and they are *"flying blind in every sense of the word."*

☆☆ **And the module's stage direction for it is perfect:**

> *"The gamemaster **secretly** makes an Opposed Willpower Test against the Spirit's Force for each player character… **If the pilot has not succumbed to Fear, the referee should make a secret roll versus that character's Piloting Skill, but regardless of the result, the gamemaster should just shake his head and wince.**"*

☆ If they win it, the autopilot can *"miraculously"* recover. ⚠ If they crash, they are down in jungle, injured, with a storm spirit that can now call rain on them from its own domain — *"the possibilities are endless and the gamemaster is encouraged to go wild."*

⚠⚠ **And at home, the fixer tells them to keep the flower and wait to be contacted by a different Johnson.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A hundred and fifty thousand each**, plus the bonus if nobody died.
- ☆☆ **An orchid they are told to hold onto**, which is the first time the relay has left something *in their hands* between chapters.
- ☆☆☆ **A face they have seen before**, if anybody was paying attention in a cell three episodes ago.
- ☆ **Two Amazonian tribes with opinions about them** — one that helped because it was asked to by someone they have never met, and one that worships their target as a war god.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The painting is the hologram**	⚠ **Immediately, if they notice.** The single cleanest self-made connection in the campaign
☆☆ **The chip matches the policlub code and is useless alone**	**4.3 / 4.5** — ☆ the relay pieces are starting to look like parts of one object
☆ **"The Laughing One"**	Third appearance of the jester after the rapier in **1.4**

	and the wax seal in **2.8**
The flower, kept	**4.3**
☆☆☆ **Harlequin is now tempted to tell them everything**	**4.5**
Amazonia, and how it works	**6.4 Forbidden Fruit** returns here

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — "MY DEAR ONCE-BROTHER," AND WHAT IT IS SAFE TO DO WITH IT.**

☆☆ **The line is a gift and it needs no decoration.** Two immortals, one of whom is orchestrating the systematic humiliation of the other, and the private word he uses for him is *brother* — with *once* in front of it.

⚠ In this campaign's terms these are **Caimbeul and Ehran**, and their argument predates the Sixth World entirely. ☆ The register's instruction stands: play them as **two very old people who have had this fight before**, and never let either of them say how old it is.

⚠⚠⚠ **Do not let anyone explain "once-brother."** Not an NPC, not a Knowledge test, not a footnote. **It is not a metaphor and it is not a clan title and the players are not entitled to know which.** ☆ It is the single most humanising word either of these men gets in eight chapters, and its entire value is that it arrives without context in a journal entry about stealing a flower.

☆☆ **"The Laughing One" is doing quieter work.** Harlequin has been visiting these people long enough to be a story they tell. ⚠ The shaman **denies having said it** — which is worth far more than a straight answer.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE PAINTING, AND IT IS THE BEST-PLACED PAYOFF SO FAR BECAUSE NOBODY PROMPTS IT.**

In **3.3** they were prisoners, and a spirit who wanted her master dead left a holodisplay running in her room, cycling a portrait of a delicate-featured nobleman in seventeenth-century French court dress. ☆ A test let them half-recognise the face and put a name to it.

Here, six months and a continent later, the original oil hangs in a study in the man's private retreat, in a house where the staff know him by a false name and a Mask spell.

⚠⚠ **Say nothing. Describe the room, describe the painting, and move on.**

☆ **And 2.8, mechanically.** The chip they leave behind matches the back-door code they stole from the policlub, and is useless alone — ☆☆ **which is the first hard evidence the players have that the objects in this relay are pieces of one thing.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Read the journal entry aloud, at the top, as the cold open.** It is the only time in eight chapters the players hear the man moving them think about anything other than winning.
- ☆☆ **Play the pilot's questions straight and let them be frightened of him for a whole evening.** ⚠ Then let him fly them safely, wave, and go home. **The lesson — that not every strange NPC is an agent — is worth more than any twist.**

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- ⚠⚠ **The plantation should be easy.** Do not stiffen it. The module explicitly wants the infiltration to be a snap so that the storm spirit lands on people who are already congratulating themselves.
- ☆☆ **Use the wince.** Secret Willpower rolls, a secret piloting roll, and then shake your head regardless of what you rolled. **It is theatre and it is free.**
- ☆ **Do not point at the painting.** Describe it exactly as you described the hologram in 3.3 — the court dress, the delicate features, the century — and let the table do the rest. ⚠ **If nobody notices, that is a legitimate outcome, and 4.5 will still work.**

4.2 · Double Take

SOURCE

📕 ***Corporate Punishment*** (FASA, **SR3**), adventure 1 of 3. Written for 2060.

⚠ **Two re-skins and it drops into 2056 cleanly. Strip the Dunkelzahn bequest** — the gene-mapping breakthrough is simply an enormous biotech prize and needs no inheritance attached to it. And ⚠ **swap any Novatech branding** in the page furniture; that corporation does not exist yet.

☆ **Karma:** surviving **2** · threat level **1–2** · evading the special-forces teams for a long stretch **1** · ☆☆ **joining forces with Banshee 1** · ⚠ botching the job or being captured early **−1**.

> ⚠⚠⚠ **THE BOOK OPENS WITH A WARNING AND YOU SHOULD READ IT BEFORE SCHEDULING THIS.**
>
> > *"**Double Take is a difficult run.** It places the player characters in **a hostile, foreign city from which they cannot escape** and marks them as **wanted both publicly and privately.** The characters will be on the run with **limited resources** and **several forces hunting them down.** ⚠⚠ Unless handled carefully, Double Take can easily lead to **characters getting killed or ruining their careers as shadowrunners.** Unless the characters can improvise and play their cards right, **they will have to compromise with one of the forces pursuing them.**"*
>
> ☆ The opposing NPCs are described as *"exceptionally deadly,"* and the book tells the gamemaster outright that they may need toning down — or, for a hard table, sharpening.

WHAT HAPPENS

☆☆☆ **The runners are pieces in a game between two members of Tír Tairngire's ruling Council of Princes — ⚠⚠ the great dragon Lofwyr, and the elf Aithne Oakforest.** The pieces they are moving are corporations: Saeder-Krupp on one side, Telestrian Industries on the other.

☆ **And Oakforest is the prince who never appeared in 2.10.**

The prize is a Portland laboratory which has just made a significant breakthrough in gene-mapping — specifically on the genes allegedly responsible for magical ability, ⚠⚠ **the so-called "magus factor."** Whoever controls that research takes the first step toward something nobody in the setting is ready to say out loud.

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The job comes through a company woman, hired precisely because she is being thrown away.

⭐⭐ **Moire Ferguson ran the Seattle shadows years ago under the name Banshee**, and came to the Tír because she believed in it — *"drawn to the Tir by its lofty ideals and commitment to building an elven society."* ⚠⚠ *"Instead of a promised land, she found a society wracked with the same prejudice, elitism and backstabbing that she sought to escape."*

⚠⚠⚠ **Her superiors have noticed her change of heart, which is exactly why she was given this job.** *"Fearing she may soon become a security risk, the count has decided to **dispose of her** rather than risk her going renegade. Having run black operations for the corp for years, **Moire knows more than an untrustworthy employee should.**"*

> **✎ THE ASSENSING LADDER — steal this pattern.**
>
> She is a Grade 3 initiate using masking, so a mage who tries to read her needs a secret test to get past it at all. And the payload of the reveal is not her rating. It is **how she feels about what she is doing.**

Successes	What they get
0	*"Aura? What aura?"*
1–2	Awakened, initiate, masking is tough — ⭐ *"She's also feeling **apprehensive** about something."*
3–4	Several ordeals behind her; ⭐ *"definitely feeling **uneasy** about the run, but the reason isn't clear."*
5+	⭐⭐⭐ *"You feel a strong sense of **guilt** from her, and it seems like it's connected to the run. You also pick up some slight feelings of ... **self-loathing?**"*

> ⚠ She notices the attempt and permits it. **She is not hiding how she feels. She is hiding what she is.**

The meet is in a members-only jazz club done in nineteen-twenties style — zoot suits and flapper dresses, smoky, dark, ideal for private conversation, ⚠ and it does not screen anyone for weapons. ⭐ The password is *"swordfish,"* and the invitation adds: *"You think you heard something like that on an old trid show once, but right now you can't place it."*

⭐⭐ **And if the team is reluctant, the book supplies three ways to move them that are worth stealing wholesale.** The **stick**: a contact mentions that word on the street says they are getting soft, or too uppity, too picky about work — *"What's a shadowrunner without a good rep, after all?"* The **carrot**: an NPC one of them likes calls about an exclusive show at that same club, and does not want to go alone. Or **both**, plus a personal call: *"Please consider coming — I can make it worth your while."*

⚠⚠ **Getting into the country is a set-piece of institutional menace.** Passport, medical records including vaccinations, a visitor's visa and a return ticket — ⭐ all demanded politely, while *"a discreet look at the other elf behind the counter — a buff one who looks like he eats your type for breakfast — gives you the feeling that the politeness is for show."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And on arrival they submit to a blood test, and every cyberimplant they own is deactivated** — everything except limbs needed for mobility or life support. Illegal reactivation means a heavy penalty and immediate deportation.

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⭐⭐⭐ THE FRAME, WHICH IS A MASTERCLASS

The run itself goes well. The frame was built before they arrived.

Personnel files identifying the team as Saeder-Krupp employees are inserted into a Saeder-Krupp Matrix host — where anyone checking will find them exactly where they ought to be. ⭐⭐ **The serial numbers of their own weapons, gear and cyberdeck are written into those files as corporate issue** — ⚠️ and *"conveniently, many of these items recently vanished from a Saeder-Krupp supply depot in Denver."*

⚠️⚠️ **And abbreviated files naming them as "known Saeder-Krupp operatives" are pre-loaded into Tír law-enforcement datastores.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Forge the employment record. Make their own possessions corroborate it. Then put it in the police database in advance, so that when the accusation is made it lands as confirmation rather than as a claim.**

They hand over the data in a downtown park, get paid, and go back to the hotel. And that evening: *"Your daydream comes to* ***a crashing halt*** *as you realize* ***you're staring yourself in the face.****"* They are on the news, wanted for questioning, in a country they cannot legally leave.

⚠️⚠️ FOUR SEPARATE FORCES ARE NOW HUNTING THEM

- **The Tír Peace Force**, because they are publicly wanted in a city under effective martial law.
- **The victim corporation**, which has a team on the streets trying to recover its stolen research.
- ⚠️⚠️ **Saeder-Krupp**, because **Lofwyr is displeased**, and has sent one of his personal assistants to find out who used his name.
- ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **And a unit of Tír special forces on loan from Prince Oakforest**, whose orders are to eliminate the runners *"before they cause any problems"* — ⚠️ **and to dispose of Banshee once they are dead, or immediately if she is found working with them.**

⭐⭐ **The only workable plan is to find the woman who hired them**, and she is at a biker bar she used to frequent — **and so are the special forces.** ⚠️ They attack the moment they see runners and Banshee in the same room, ⭐⭐ **and the team has to fight alongside her to survive it.** She would very much prefer to run and leave them; they can talk her out of that.

⭐ **Joining forces with her is worth a Karma point**, which is the book quietly stating a preference.

⭐⭐ THE ENDINGS, AND ONE OF THEM IS A TRAP THAT LASTS FOUR SEASONS

The adventure is open-ended and the module says so. ⚠️ But the most likely resolution is that the dragon's people reach them first, and the dragon's man wants two things: to learn who used his employer's name, and to gather evidence that shifts the blame onto Telestrian.

⚠️⚠️ *"He will use and abuse the runners for as much as they are worth;* ***Lofwyr considers their actions a personal affront****, and so they must redeem themselves or accept appropriate punishment."*

⭐ And if they deliver, he is gracious. He observes that they have made other powerful enemies in the process. He points out that Saeder-Krupp can make all of that go away and get them safely home. ⭐⭐ ***"The runners would merely owe the corporation a small debt...."***

⚠️⚠️⚠️ AND THE BOOK'S INSTRUCTION TO THE GAMEMASTER IS EXPLICIT:

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> *"The gamemaster is encouraged to devise events so that* ***each debt repaid somehow incurs a new one.*** ***Once in the dragon's clutches, the runners should find it difficult to free themselves.****"*

The other ending is simpler: the special forces catch them, and kill them.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Most likely, a debt to Lofwyr that is designed never to be paid off.** **This is a campaign-level decision disguised as a survival choice, and it should be recorded in the save in capital letters.**
- **Banshee**, if they fought beside her and got her out — a disillusioned ex-runner with a decade of black operations inside an elven nation, who now has nowhere to go.
- **The knowledge that two members of a foreign country's ruling council were moving them**, and that neither one ever met them.
- **And a permanent record in Tír law enforcement**, which no amount of later evidence entirely erases.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
A debt to Lofwyr	**Season 8.** The Rite of Succession ends with Lofwyr making the team an offer, and a team that already owes him is having a very different conversation
Aithne Oakforest, named at last	**Season 4**, and the elven court threads throughout
The magus factor	Gene-tech; and a third corporation trying to industrialise what a person *is*, after **3.2** and **3.5**
Scale, a dragon's personal assistant	Any season; a recurring intermediary who is not a Johnson
Banshee	An ally with an unusual résumé

CROSSOVER — LOFWYR, AND WHY HE NEEDS NO DISGUISE.

Lofwyr is Lofwyr. He is on the reincarnation roster as **the same being, unchanged, Fourth World to Sixth** — *"the same bastard, unchanged. The name carries straight across."* **He did not come back as somebody. He simply never stopped.**

What that buys the gamemaster is a tone. The dragons who returned under new names — the ones this campaign is quietly tracking — have all had to *become* something in this age. Lofwyr has not. He owns the largest corporation on earth and sits on the ruling council of an elven nation **under his own name**, and he has never needed to explain himself to anyone.

He never appears in this adventure, and he should not. The players deal with an assistant, and a debt, and a voice at one remove. **That is exactly how he should feel until Season 8.**

Nothing is stated at the table, and there is nothing here for a player to work out. This box is for you: **when he finally makes his offer in 8.7, he will be the only major figure in the campaign who has been the same person the entire time.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

2.10, AND IT IS THE PAYOFF THAT ADVENTURE DELIBERATELY WITHHELD.

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In *Celtic Double-Cross* the whole affair was arranged by a Tír Tairngire prince who used an aide and a team of shadowrunners as pieces, ⚠ **and who never appeared on screen at all.** The players finished that adventure knowing they had been moved by someone they never saw.

Here he has a name, a seat on the Council of Princes, a count acting as his agent, a corporation he owns stock in, and a special forces unit on loan — and he is doing it again.

⭐⭐ **And the Tír ladder completes its fourth rung:** they heard about the country in **1.6**, were beaten by its diplomat in **2.5**, were framed as terrorists inside it in **2.10**, ⚠⚠ **and are now framed as a rival dragon's operatives by one of its princes.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Read the difficulty warning to yourself, honestly, before you schedule this.** A hostile country, no legal exit, four hunting parties and deactivated cyberware. ⭐ **The intended outcome is that they have to make a deal with somebody**, and the interesting question is which.
- ⭐⭐ **Run the assensing ladder if anyone tries it.** Guilt and self-loathing, from the woman who is about to sell them — ⚠ and she lets them look. **A team that reads her and takes the job anyway has made a choice.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Explain the frame afterwards, in detail, and let them admire it.** Their own serial numbers, in a corporate file, matching a depot theft in Denver, with the police database already updated. **Runners should recognise good work when it is done to them.**
- ⚠⚠ **The Lofwyr debt is the single most consequential thing in Season Four outside the finale.** ⭐ Do not let it be taken lightly and do not let it be cheap. **Write down the exact wording of what they agreed to.**
- ⭐ **Give them the chance to save Banshee, and do not signpost that it matters.** One Karma point, and an ally the campaign did not plan for them.

4.3 · Harlequin, chapter 7 — FUTURE

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305), mini-adventure 7 of 8. ⚠ Requires ***The Grimoire***. Thread rules at **1.4**; the previous beat was **4.1**.

Pay: 70,000 nuyen on her safe return, ten thousand in advance. Commercial flight out, private jet home.

⭐⭐ **NO KARMA TABLE — AND THAT IS THE DESIGN, NOT AN OMISSION.** Chapters one through six each print an objective Karma table. **This one prints none, and the finale back-pays it:** chapter eight awards *"a blanket **8 points or so, plus 1 point for each adventure segment in which the full player-character team participated**."* FUTURE is **deferred, not unpaid**. The core rules agree — Karma is awarded at the end of an *adventure*, and ***Harlequin*** is one adventure in eight segments, so the finale is the only place an award is structurally owed. The per-chapter tables are a courtesy for gamemasters running the segments interleaved across months, which is how this campaign is built to be played.

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⭐⭐⭐ **Note what it pays instead. Seventy thousand nuyen plus a ten-thousand advance is the largest single payday the runners will see for four seasons** — and it lands in the chapter where the book says the team should realise they are in this thing whether they like it or not. **The module pays you in money exactly where it stops paying you in growth.**

⚠⚠ **Do not run it as a zero at the table.** Award the individual points that are available in every chapter regardless of an objective table — roleplaying, smarts, guts, drama — and the handling of Frosty is the obvious earner. Then let the segment point land at **4.5**, where it is designed to.

> ✎ **A reading the book does not offer, and one to keep to yourself.** Every other chapter's Karma table carries a mercy line: protect the little girl, let Fierelle atone, no casualties on the plantation, *"if medical attention is given to either a dying Iggy or Bonecrack, compassion is worth a point."* **This chapter has no such line available.** It is the abduction of an innocent woman on a hard rail, and there is no kind way to do it. A Karma table would have had nothing to reward. ⚠ Elegant if it was intended; the text never says so, and you should not say so either.

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **THE JOB IS TO KIDNAP THE DELETED FILE FROM EPISODE 1.4.**

In the very first Harlequin chapter, three in-game years ago, the team broke into a publisher and — if their decker was curious — pulled a genealogical archive containing two centuries of surveillance on dozens of bloodlines. One data block had been **deleted but never closed**. Enough fragments survived to establish that its subject was **a woman in her late twenties, from a Midwest regional subset**, and that whatever went into that file had been **echoed somewhere else.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Her name is Jane Foster, she lives in Columbia, Missouri, she is Ehran the Scribe's daughter, and the runners are being sent to collect her.**

⭐ *"Jane does not know who her parents were, much less that she is Ehran's daughter.* ***She's barely even heard of Ehran.****"*

⭐⭐ **And somebody has already tried.** Fearing the ritual had gone too far, **Ehran sent his own people to take her somewhere safe** — ⚠ *"unfortunately, the thugs blew it and Jane's gone into hiding."* She is now being sheltered by a go-gang.

⚠⚠ THE CAMPAIGN STOPS PRETENDING THEY HAVE A CHOICE

The summons is not an offer. ***"You have the flower?*** *That is very good... Be at the Style tonight, eight sharp...* ⚠ ***Don't make me come to you. The results would be most unpleasant. And bring the flower. You will be needing it.****"*

⭐ The restaurant's head of door security is a grinning troll who *"never stops grinning as she pats you down for hidden weapons.* ***This is obviously her idea of a good time.****"*

⚠⚠ **And the module tells the gamemaster to close every exit.** *"By now the team should realize they are in this run for the long haul. Swept up in events beyond their control,* ***they should see that the safest path is the one of least resistance.****"* If they balk, a trusted contact warns that someone has put **a hundred and fifty thousand nuyen on each of their heads** and every street punk in the city is hunting them.

⚠⚠⚠ **And if they still refuse: kidnap them.** *"When they awake, they are in the Cessna, approaching Columbia Regional Airport...* ⭐ *he wants to finish the ritual, however, so don't let the*

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team get into a firefight with Harlequin's men. Just take them out and go to PRESENT. ⚠⚠ ***Have another team bring Jane Foster in.***"

> ✎ **ON THE RAILROAD, BECAUSE THIS DOCUMENT HAS A RULE ABOUT IT.**
>
> ☆☆ **Read that last instruction again, because it is not actually a railroad — it is the opposite.** A team that refuses this job **still refuses it.** Somebody else collects Jane. The ritual proceeds. And the players are still delivered to chapter eight, because chapter eight is about *them*, not about the errand.
>
> ⚠ **The bounty and the abduction are pressure, not compulsion.** ☆ If your table digs in and will not take this job, **let them not take it** — and then have chapter eight happen to them anyway, exactly as the module instructs. **They lose seventy thousand nuyen and the chance to have seen her face. Nothing else changes.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **This is the same contingency as 1.4's, six chapters later: the Great Game proceeds regardless.** It is the most consistent design principle in the whole campaign, and it is what makes eight chapters of being someone's pawn playable without ever once being forced.

☆☆☆ THE APARTMENT IS A MASTERCLASS IN READING A ROOM

Downtown Columbia, ☆ where *"the tallest of these structures reaches only eight or nine stories, reminding you once again that Columbia is a truly small town."*

The door is ajar. ⚠ *"It appears as though the maglock was poorly bypassed, fusing the mechanism into so much slag.* ***It looks like the calling card of an amateur thief.****"*

Inside: a beautiful flat, good paintings, expensive Navaho pottery — ⚠ **and one of the pots is in pieces on the floor by the door, in a large quantity of blood.**

Every room rewards a closer look, and the details reconstruct the fight:

Room	What a careful search yields
Kitchen	☆ *"Mostly stocked with soy…* ***Jane must eat out a lot****."* Then a payroll stub with her employer's address
Living room	The pottery was a weapon — *"it must have been a truly beautiful piece."* The wound was painful but *"probably not fatal."* ☆☆ Then: *"Somebody got pushed into an unfinished oil painting near the front door.* ***A small hand smeared the paint before pushing through the thin canvas.*** *The painting is on the opposite side of the door from the bloodstains, leading you to believe* ***Jane was facing two opponents****"*
Bedroom	She was asleep when they came. ☆ *"The attackers allowed Jane to dress quickly"* — her nightgown in the corner, and an open drawer of **heavy sweaters and jeans.** ⚠ **She dressed for running.** Then a bar's disposable lighter
☆☆☆ **Bathroom**	*"The mirror is heavily smudged with finger prints that form a kind of pattern."* ⚠⚠ **Steam it, and it says: "HELP GET PRETENDERS."** She wrote it while they let her use the bathroom, before they took her out

⚠⚠ **And magic will not find her.** Ritual sorcery simply fails, and a Magical Theory test reveals only that *"****something has been done to conceal her, something powerful enough to obscure the path to her.****"*

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THE TRAIL, AND A TOWN THAT IS NOT SEATTLE

⭐⭐ **The tonal instruction is the best thing in the chapter after the mirror.** *"Columbia is a peaceful enough town that **bar owners don't usually need Trolls** to man the doors or check for weapons."* Fights are hands and blades. ⚠️ **The go-gang will not pull guns unless shot at first** — and *"if a runner pulls an automatic weapon, he will become the immediate target of **all** the Pretenders."*

Their Seattle habits are wrong here, and the town will punish them for it.

⭐ **Her employer is a decent man with the wrong theory.** He hired her after his previous secretary vanished, and ⚠️ *"blames himself for her seeming demise."* Now Jane is gone too and he is beside himself. ⭐⭐ **There is no connection whatsoever** — the first secretary *"eloped with a member of that city's championship UrbanBrawl squad."*

⭐⭐ **The bar has a dance floor with three dozen mirror-shaded punks lying motionless on it.** *"The object is to **remain as still as possible while lying on the dance floor, assaulted by a wall of screaming sound.** These dancers must have had a lot of practice."*

⭐ **The gang sheltering her were a bar band once**, who *"never got their one big break. Frustrated and disheartened, they turned to their only other loves, booze and bikes."* ⚠️ *"They are not, however, nearly as tough as their reputation... **a determined team could take them.**"* Their leader has a quiet crush on her, and his lieutenant has worked that out and will strike the moment he does.

⚠️ **And a nun who is not a nun runs the halfway house she is hiding in** — a hardened criminal fronting an all-girl gang, using a home for women leaving prison as a recruiting pool. ⭐ *"Suddenly, the nun screams, '**Beat it, Janey, they're here!**'... Sister Ann glares up at you, **daring you to do something.**"* ⭐⭐ She will hand Jane over — **and herself** — if the runners guarantee her release.

⭐⭐⭐ AND HERE IS WHERE THREE YEARS PAY OFF

⚠️ **Ehran's team is a shambles.** He assembled it at the last moment because *"the chaos caused by Harlequin has made [experienced people] impossible"* to spare. ⭐ It is led by a man on his first command who has already made serious tactical errors; one member thinks he is a moron and the UCAS a backward pit; another is on her first shadowrun and **it was her mistake that let Jane get away.**

⭐⭐ Only the leader knows why they are doing it, and even he knows almost nothing: *"All Banger knows is that Ehran instructed him to find Jane Foster, grab her, and take her to a safe location."*

⚠️⚠️⚠️ AND IN THEIR MOTEL ROOM THERE IS A DATACHIP WITH A FULL FILE ON JANE FOSTER.

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"If a runner familiar with the medical/genealogy file found in the Sylvan system in PHYSICAL examines the Foster file, there is a chance he will notice a connection."*** A Biology (Genetics), Perception, or appropriate Special Skill test. ***"Success will link Jane Foster to the deleted entry in the biomedical data extract."***

That test only exists for a team that stole a file in episode four and kept it.

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⭐⭐ **WHAT WAS DONE TO HER**

⚠⚠⚠ *"Unknown to Jane, she has **a spell lock grafted to the bone of her right thigh**. Ehran arranged for her to **fall ill when she was a small child**, and while she was in the hospital, he had **an intricate pattern of special metals woven into that bone.** At that time, Ehran cast a powerful but subtle spell that **inhibited magicians of lesser power from tracking and finding her.**"*

⭐ Activated, it lets him find her instantly. ⚠ *"By the same token, it establishes an obvious connection between Ehran and Jane **for those who know what to look for.**"*

⚠⚠ *"Ehran has **not** activated the spell for fear of leading Harlequin to his daughter. What he doesn't know is that **Harlequin already knows exactly where to look.**"*

⭐⭐ **She has never met him. He made her sick on purpose so he could have metal put in her leg. And he has spent her whole life not contacting her in order to keep her safe.**

⭐ She grew up in orphanages, put herself through university, and ⚠⚠ *"has always wondered about her parents, especially her father, **but has not devoted a single moment to looking for them.**"* Her friends in the gang *"are probably the closest thing she has to a family,"* and ⭐⭐ ***"friends are Jane's only blind spot."***

⭐⭐⭐ **And she wears one thing she never takes off: a heavy platinum ring in the shape of a coiled dragon.**

THE HANDOFF

⭐ *"She seems tired and out of it, as though the last few days have been too much for her. **She isn't used to this type of life, but then, who is?** She will not talk to you or follow your spoken commands, **but lets herself be led.**"*

⚠⚠ **And the module writes the players' conscience for them:**

> *"You smile at the thought of another job done. Seated ahead of you, Frosty looks out the window. **Your smile vanishes as you wonder whether you are doing the right thing. It is obvious Frosty doesn't have a clue to what is going on.** You settle back into the seat and try to console yourself with the thought of all of those nuyen."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And at the airport there has been a slight change of plan. They are about to meet their employer. Their real employer.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **The spell lock in her thigh**	**4.5** — ⚠ where the ritual backfires and **shatters it**
⭐⭐ **The coiled dragon ring she never removes**	⚠ Unexplained. **Leave it that way**
The flower, left in her apartment	The last relay object before the daughter herself
⭐⭐⭐ **"Their real employer"**	**4.5**, immediately

> ⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — the identities are at 1.4 and nothing new is added. But note what this chapter says about the man.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **Ehran has a child, and his entire relationship with her consists of making her ill so that a spell could be anchored in her bone, and then never speaking to her.** He

> has not activated the protection that would let him find her, because using it would lead his enemy to her. ⚠ He does not know his enemy has known where she was the entire time.
>
> ☆ **Play that as love, because it is.** It is also monstrous, and the two are not in tension — ⚠⚠ **that combination is the most Fourth World thing about him.** These are people who plan in centuries and whose affection expresses itself as infrastructure.

> ⚠ **Say none of this.** The players meet a frightened woman who does not know who her father is, and a team of incompetents who are trying to save her without being told why.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE LARGEST PAYOFF IN THE CAMPAIGN, AND IT IS THREE IN-GAME YEARS OLD.**

1.4. A publisher's datastore. A file of two centuries of bloodline surveillance that always stopped the moment a subject sickened or reached their late thirties. **One block deleted but never closed.** A woman in her late twenties. Midwest. Echoed elsewhere. ☆ And a Karma point the gamemaster was instructed to award **without explaining why.**

4.3. They are sent to kidnap her, by name, and the module supplies **a specific skill test that only means anything to a character who read that file.**

⚠⚠ **Do not connect it for them.** ☆ Put the datachip in the motel room, let somebody make the test, and then be quiet.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **The apartment is the best forensic scene in the campaign — slow down and run it room by room.** The amateur maglock job, the smashed pot, the small hand through the canvas, the drawer of heavy clothes, and the mirror. **A team that reads that room correctly knows she fought, escaped, dressed for the cold and left them a message, before they have spoken to a single witness.**
- ⚠⚠ **Enforce the small town.** No troll bouncers, no automatic weapons, gangs that fight with fists until somebody escalates. ☆ **If a runner draws a machine gun in that bar, every Pretender in the room comes for that character specifically.**
- ☆ **Ehran's team should be pitiable.** They are frightened amateurs doing a rescue they do not understand, and one of them is on her first job and has already failed once. ⚠ **A team that slaughters them has killed four people who were trying to protect the same woman.**
- ☆☆ **Let them notice she is not a target.** Tired, silent, compliant, being led. ⚠ **The module supplies the guilt in its own read-aloud text — use it verbatim and do not add to it.**
- ⚠ **The ring is not a clue and there is no answer to it.** She never takes it off. That is all anyone gets.

4.4 · The Recovered Standalone

SOURCE

🔪 **This is not a module. It is a slot, and it is load-bearing.**

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⭐⭐⭐ **The *Harlequin* book requires unrelated adventures between its chapters** — that is stated in its own gamemaster notes and it is why the thread has been spread across three in-game years. ⚠️ **This slot is not optional filler. It is the mechanism.**

⭐⭐ **And chapter eight itself is built to accommodate it.** *FUTURE* ends with the team handing Jane over and being told they are about to meet their real employer. **The next chapter opens with a scene called "Waiting for the Call."** The wait is written into the module. **This slot is that wait.**

WHAT GOES IN IT

⭐⭐⭐ **One rule governs the choice: it must not be about elves.**

Nothing to do with the Tír, immortals, policlubs, ancient grudges or the Game. ⚠️ **The entire job of this episode is to be about something else** — so that when the summons finally comes in 4.5, the players have spent a session thinking about anything but him.

⭐ **Two sources.** Any Season 1–3 module the table skipped — a season is a menu, and by now something has been left on it. Or a thread out of a **`SIDE-QUESTS`** block, which every adventure JSON in this project carries in its `_gm_analysis`.

> ✎ **A MENU, DRAWN FROM WHAT THIS PARTICULAR CAMPAIGN HAS ALREADY LEFT LYING AROUND.**

Thread	From	Why it suits this slot
⭐⭐⭐ **Disposing of the surplus Red Masque**	3.4	**They own a weapon that kills every mammal over forty kilos.** Entirely their own mess, entirely mundane, and impossible to do quietly
⭐⭐ **Wilhelm Park needs something**	3.2	The ork underground calls in the relationship. ⭐ Warm, local, and the antidote to four seasons of being used
⭐⭐ **Booker Pengrave, now that he owns Global**	1.7 → 2.2	⚠️ The enemy they personally made in Season One **runs a corporation now**. The newsnet said so and nobody mentioned it again
⭐ **Freya calls in the favour**	1.7	An abandoned mage with an agenda and a debt to collect from a fixer who left her to die
⭐ **Cooperman's horde, if it outlived him**	1.7	A Barrens gang war that never stopped
⭐ **The Ripper is still working**, if Griffin escaped	1.7	⚠️ A serial-killer hunt Lone Star is already running badly
The orks Aztechnology took for raw material	3.2	A rescue, and a chance to finish something they walked past
The Children of Sophocles ask for help	2.5	A fellowship of non-combatant scholars who like them
Edward Crull and Mitsuhama	2.7	A corporate enemy left standing
The Iron Legion vendetta	3.6	Street-level, personal, and cheap to run

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> ⚠ **Avoid for this slot:** anything involving Bloodwing, the O'Tooles, Tír politics or the Council of Princes. ☆ **Those are Season Four's actual subject and they belong in the episodes on either side, not in the gap between them.**

WHAT THIS EPISODE IS ACTUALLY FOR

☆☆ **Three things, none of which are plot.**

① **It restores the campaign's ordinary weather.** After a kidnapping in Missouri and before a summons from a man who has been moving them for three years, the players need one session of ordinary criminal work. ⚠ **Without it, chapter eight arrives as the next thing that happens rather than as an interruption.**

② **It is the last normal job of the season, and probably of the arc.** ☆ Everything from 4.5 onward is Harlequin, Ehran, Althain, and then the finale — **and the finale is an unbreakable block.** This is the last time before the end of Season Four that the team gets to simply take work, do it, and be paid.

☆☆☆ ③ **It lets them use what they have become.** By now they have a dragon's debt, a great dragon's business partnership, an ork underground, a federal contact, a Lone Star detective, a vampire gang boss, a smuggler crew, an elven mage who was left for dead, and a woman who runs a nation's worth of grudges. ⚠ **Pick a job that requires three of those and watch the players realise how much furniture they are carrying.**

PLANTED HERE

⚠ **Nothing, deliberately.** ☆ If the recovered thread plants anything, it plants it for *after* the campaign — Season Five and beyond. **This slot exists to be finished.**

> **CROSSOVER — none, and that is the point of the episode.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **Do not put a correspondence in this slot.** ☆ Season Four is the densest crossover stretch in the campaign — 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6 are all carrying identity material — **and the gap between them has to be genuinely empty** or the pattern becomes visible as a pattern.
>
> ☆☆ **A season in which every single session contains a hidden Fourth World reference is a season in which the players start looking for hidden Fourth World references.** This episode's contribution to the crossover is that it does not contain one.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆ **Whatever the table left unfinished.** That is the whole design: **the slot is a hook for the campaign's own loose ends**, and which one gets picked says as much about the group as any moral fork.

⚠ If nothing was left unfinished — if the table ran all twenty-seven previous episodes — ☆ then improvise from a `SIDE-QUESTS` block and make it small. **A job with a beginning, a middle, an end, and a payment.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Do not make it important.** The temptation in a season this dense is to make every session advance something. ⚠ **Resist it.** The value of this episode is that it is about nothing else.

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- ⭐⭐ **Let the summons arrive at the worst moment.** Mid-job, mid-negotiation, mid-firefight — a message, a courier, a face they recognise. ⚠️ **Then let them finish the job first.** The Game has waited three years; it can wait a night.
- ⭐ **Ask the players who they want to call.** ⚠️ Four seasons of contacts are sitting unused in the save, and this is the session to spend them.
- ⚠️ **Keep it to one session.** ⭐ Everything after this is a block, and a table that loses momentum here will feel the finale as a chore rather than an arrival.

4.5 · Harlequin, chapter 8 — PRESENT

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin*** (FASA #7305), mini-adventure 8 of 8 — **the last one.** ⚠️ Requires ***The Grimoire***. Thread rules at **1.4**; the previous beat was **4.3**.

⭐⭐ **Karma: a blanket 8 points or so, plus 1 point for each adventure segment in which the full player-character team participated.** ⚠️⚠️ **This is the award for the whole eight-chapter campaign, not for this session** — which is why chapter seven printed no table of its own. Count the segments honestly, including the ones that went badly.

⚠️ **There is no fee.** ⭐ Their payment is an object, handed over without explanation in the last thirty seconds, and if nobody picks it up nobody gets paid.

> ✎ **SCHEDULING — this episode and 4.6 are one block, and it starts here.**
>
> ⚠️⚠️ Everything from this point to the end of the season is continuous. **Do not schedule 4.5 unless the table can also reach 4.6 within a session or two of real time.** The sequel opens on Harlequin coming back to them, and the whole force of that depends on the memory of him vanishing from this room being fresh.

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **The chapter opens on a line of Latin, and it is the key to the entire eight-chapter arc.**

> ***"Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale."***

Catullus. ***"And forever, brother, hail and farewell."*** ⚠️⚠️ It is the closing line of a poem written **at a brother's grave** — and it is sitting at the top of a chapter in which one immortal elf is about to try to kill another. ⭐⭐ Three episodes ago, in a private journal the players were never meant to read, the man moving them called his enemy ***"my dear once-brother."***

The book's own promise for the chapter: *"a whirlwind tour of the world of Harlequin and Ehran and their Hate,"* ending at Ehran's sanctum on Mount Saint Helens — **Althain** — where *"clues to some of the great mysteries of the world are here for the perceptive shadowrunner to discover and ponder."*

THE SUMMONS, AND THE PLACE HE CHOSE

The call comes from Harlequin himself. After three in-game years of Johnsons, the voice is finally his:

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> *"**Bravo! My money well-spent. One more deed and your business with me is concluded. Bring the girl and your associates to the Southwind complex in Tarislar at dawn tomorrow. Do not come before then or you risk provoking the wrath of the locals. They expect you, but with the sun. I look forward to our finally meeting.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **Tarislar is the best-chosen location in the campaign, and the book knows exactly why.** *"They say it means **'Remembrance'** in Elvish, but remembrance of what? The dead? The power of nature? The living? No one can say. **It's almost as though the place named itself.**"*

Thirty-five years ago it was an ordinary suburb. ⚠ *"The day the Native American Ghost Dancers blew the volcanoes changed that forever. Ash, dirt, and rock fell over the area for days on end, burying homes, people, and dreams. **Many say dreams will never return to Puyallup.**"* Since the Night of Rage the ruins have sheltered metahumans, and elves especially, with nowhere else to go — ⚠⚠ *"a cruel reminder of the sanctuary once promised Metahumans, but now denied them by politics and prejudice."*

⭐⭐ **The arrival image is the whole district in one paragraph:** *"figures now line the streets, the dark, shifting shapes barely visible in the pre-dawn haze… **not much visible but the plastic sheen of filter masks** on some faces. They are young, old, and in between, **but all remain silent as they stand and watch you pass.**"*

⚠ **The air is a mechanic.** A filter mask costs **¥20**; without one, a **Body Resistance Test against a 3M2 Stun attack every ten minutes.**

⭐ **And Harlequin has been living here for a year.** The Southwind complex is three abandoned forty-storey insurance towers that had been gang property until *"Harlequin arrived and took up residence on the upper floor of the center building. **The gangs and the criminals soon left, afraid of the Laughing Man they couldn't bribe or threaten.**"* The locals were simply grateful for the peace.

⚠⚠ **A blind elf is waiting.** He stands in layered white cloth, so still that *"the amount of dust covering him reveals that he must have been standing there for many hours."* He unwraps his face — *"the milky whiteness of his eyes gives away his blindness"* — ⭐⭐ **turns toward Jane Foster, and nods.** *"He awaits you behind me, at the top. Join him with the woman."*

⭐ **The gamemaster is told to play him as though he had full sight.**

FORTY STOREYS, AND THE MAN AT THE TOP

The elevators are dead. Forty flights, with a **Body Resistance Test against 4L2 Stun** for fatigue at the twentieth and the fortieth. ⚠ It is a climb, and the module uses every landing of it:

> *"Ten stories… **you do not like what it reveals.** Twenty stories. **Jane Foster has said and done little since being abducted from Columbia. Now, as she climbs, you see an odd light coming into her eyes. It is as though she senses a resolution coming, and welcomes it.** Thirty stories. You see writing on the wall: '**One must know chaos within to give birth to a dancing star**.' **There is also a darkened smear of something leading to the ground. But nothing is there now.** Ahead, from on high, comes the sound of music. Forty stories… **the sound of one steel guitar.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **And then, at last:**

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> *"Standing there... is the figure of a man. His back is to you, and you see only the dark olive of his long coat, the gray-streaked black of his pony-tailed hair, and the thin, gleaming ebony and steel neck of his guitar... **The music speaks of something grand and majestic, its melody at once ALIEN yet somehow FAMILIAR and exhilarating.** The wind blows through the building and the sun touches the far mountains... **He turns, revealing a face painted in the harlequin-clown markings of old, then breaks into a wide grin. 'Gentlemen!' he says, his voice distinctive and oddly accented. 'Welcome to Mount Olympus. I've been expecting you.'"***

⭐ **The gamemaster's brief for playing him is one word: *quicksilver.*** *"His attitude, demeanor, body language, vocal/speech patterns, and humor can and will change from one moment to the next."*

⚠️ A character with the right specialist skill may notice **the guitar is at least a hundred years old.**

⭐⭐ **He shakes every runner's hand, one at a time** — *"his manner should suggest that this is important to him"* — and saves Jane for last. *"She reluctantly offers her hand, which he lifts gently to his lips. **'Miss Foster,' he says softly, 'I've waited a lifetime to meet you.'"***

WHAT HE TELLS THEM, AND WHAT HE DOES NOT

⚠️ *"**Are you certain you wish to know?** There's truth to the idea that ignorance is bliss. But I will at least partially sate your curiosity."*

What follows is the answer to three years of questions, and it is deliberately, maddeningly thin:

> ***"Let us just say that Ehran and I are old friends. VERY old friends. Now, Ehran is very good at a certain game we used to play when we were younger. I, however, am even better. Only now has he become aware of it."***
>
> ***"Everything you have been asked to do has struck at some basic part of Ehran's existence. His Past, and Future, Loves and Hates, and Physical and Spiritual selves. By striking at each of these, I have proved his vulnerability to my power."***

⭐ He assures them they are safe: the ritual forbids Ehran from striking at the agents of the challenge. ⚠️⚠️ **If anyone who spent 3.3 in a cell being tortured objects to that characterisation, Harlequin dismisses it offhandedly** — Ehran is *"a true parliamentarian. **Rules are everything to him.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE RITUAL IS WRITTEN ON THE WALL IN BLACK MARKER**, headed *"The Ritual, to the best of my recollection, by -H-"*:

> *From the focus of my heart, I call the words / Of anger spoken and desire revealed / By my Challenge of word and deed / By my blood consecrate thy bane invoked / **Thy shape and form decreed never was***
>
> *On thy **PHYSICAL** form, I call the words of rendering / On thy **HATES**, I invoke Justice, thy anger unappeased / On thy **PAST** in shadows, I shine the light revealed / On thy **LOVES** and joys, I gift separation / On thy **SPIRIT**, I speak abandonment / On thy **FUTURE**, I bring fear and grief / **On thee I invoke all***

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> *The winds shall erase thy name / The sands the traces of thy path / The sun the coolness of thy shadow / And unto the waters I command thy essence /* ***Thy shape and form decreed never was***

⭐⭐⭐ **Every line of the middle stanza is a job they ran.** Three years of work, itemised in verse on a wall. Asked why it is in English at all, *"Harlequin smiles and laughs.* ***'I wanted to see how it read in English,'*** *he says."*

THE RITUAL, THE SPELL LOCK, AND THE PART THAT GOES WRONG

⭐⭐ **Most of the performance is theatre and the book says so outright.** He gestures grandly *"(but needlessly)"*, intones words in a melodic sing-song tongue nobody understands — ⭐ **which is a childhood rhyme about clouds** — and ⭐⭐⭐ **asks the runners to hum. Continuously. He works with them carefully to achieve the proper pitch, eventually accepts whatever they can produce as the best he is likely to get, and returns to Jane muttering something about "impurities."**

Then he tells Jane Foster who she is.

> ***"Now, my dear Miss Foster, what you do not know is that you are the long-lost daughter of the illustrious Ehran the Scribe, as he currently bills himself. I should add that he did not lose you, but ALLOWED YOU TO LOSE HIM."***
>
> ***"Before he so callously abandoned you as a child — or rather allowed you to be abandoned following your lovely mother's untimely demise — he placed a powerful spell lock on you... he had special materials woven into the bone of your left thigh... a spell of his own design, that would not only keep track of you, but help conceal you from prying eyes."***
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ ***"Now, this spell is far beyond the ability of any current sorcerer, so he could reasonably assume that you were safe. WHAT HE FORGOT WAS THAT BOTH HE AND I HAD UNDERGONE INSTRUCTION FROM THE SAME TEACHER. I understand the working of his link."***
>
> ***"Ehran believes that I will use you to draw him out into the open... Instead, I'm going to strike at him DIRECTLY THROUGH YOU. Through the link he has so thoughtfully provided."***

⭐ **What the magically-inclined can actually see:** Harlequin reads as **a mundane** — he is an Initiate masking his aura, and *"there is no way that any runner will be of sufficient Initiation rank to see through his Masking."* There are **no astral beings present at all.** The background count is above the norm, *"as though powerful magicks were regularly worked from this place."* An **Astral Perception (10)** spots that he and Jane are standing inside a dormant hermetic circle; an **Astral Perception (18)** finds a faint power aura in her left thigh — ⚠ **but only once she is inside the circle, and there is no sign of any link between her and Ehran.**

⚠⚠ **What he is actually doing is smaller than it looks.** He intends to activate Ehran's spell lock and push a spell back up the channel that will *"explode the equivalent of magical fireworks around Ehran for a few minutes.* ***The spell is SHOWY, but NEITHER DANGEROUS NOR FATAL."***

⚠⚠⚠ **Ehran does not know that.** Expecting exactly this move, he has prepared *"a unique, volatile spell designed to channel through the lock to Harlequin via the energy Harlequin is expending to activate it...* ***and then go off, frying Harlequin big-time."***

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So both of them spring their trap at the same instant. The circle snaps active, knocking any astrally projecting character back into their body. Harlequin gets a reflection spell up. The energy arcs to him, reverses, and goes **back down the line to Ehran** — and:

- ⚠⚠⚠ **the spell lock shatters, taking Jane Foster's thigh bone with it;**
- **Harlequin spins and crashes to the ground *"like a rag doll"*;**
- the air rushes outward as though a small concussion grenade had gone off;
- ☆☆ **and eight minutes later, everyone in the room hears the sharp crack and deep rumble of Mount Saint Helens partially erupting.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE MODULE ASKS ITS QUESTION AGAIN, FOR THE LAST TIME.** Jane is Seriously Wounded and unconscious with a shattered thigh. ⚠⚠ ***"If none of the runners has moved to aid Jane Foster, Harlequin ORDERS one of them to do so. If none of the shadowrunners present are able to assist her, Harlequin will ANGRILY step in and cast Heal Serious Wounds on her."***

⚠ Meanwhile he is *"ranting and raving in a harsh, almost guttural tongue none of the runners recognize… **cursing Ehran in that same tongue. Though they don't understand the words, Harlequin's tone is unmistakable.**"*

☆☆☆ THE INVERSION — THE BEST TURN IN THE CAMPAIGN

Then he asks them for one more thing, and it is the opposite of everything he has asked for in three years.

> *"**Gentlemen, I ask one more thing of you. YOU MUST GO TO EHRAN AND SEE WHAT HAS BECOME OF HIM. If he is injured, as I suspect, AID HIM IF YOU CAN.** The form of challenge I chose to invoke cannot result in harm to him. **If it has, I HAVE LOST AND MY HONOR IS FORFEIT.** If Ehran yet lives, I am still forbidden by the rules of the challenge to be directly involved. **Therefore, you must go.**"*

⚠ And, immediately, the threat underneath it: ***"If you do not do as I say, I will hunt you to the ends of the earth and you will suffer pain the likes of which this civilization has never dreamed."***

Then, still carrying Jane, he steps off the side of the building and drops from sight — ☆ apparently *"spirited away (so to speak) by a powerful Air Elemental."*

> **✎ THE STAGE DIRECTION UNDERNEATH ALL OF THIS, which the gamemaster should know and the players never should.**
>
> *"This entire section is actually **a staged event to get the runners to Mount Saint Helens and Ehran's sanctum. That is the ultimate goal; everything else is pure showmanship.**"*
>
> ⚠⚠ **Read that carefully before deciding how much of it Harlequin faked.** The book does not say the backfire was planned — it says the *purpose of the scene* is to send them up the mountain. ☆ The most interesting reading, and the one this outline recommends, is that **the summons and the theatre were staged and the disaster genuinely was not** — which is why he ends the scene screaming curses in a language nobody has ever heard, rather than smiling.

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GETTING TO THE MOUNTAIN

⭐ St Helens has now erupted three times in seventy-five years — the 1970s, the 2010s, and *"a few hours ago"* — ⚠ and this time there is **no continuing ash plume and no lava flow.** It blew its top and went quiet.

Three routes south, and the module writes all three. ⭐ **The tourist run:** the Salish-Shidhe Council operates daily tours to Rainier and St Helens, **¥50 each**, carry-bags searched, requiring a one-day travel visa from the Council Lodge on Council Island; the tour lasts four hours and ⚠ *"if they are not able to rejoin the tour, explanations will be the least of their problems."* **The press run:** hijack a newsnet chopper and pose as a crew — ⚠ the border patrol will likely be wise to it **by the time they try to come back. Redline:** crash the border, take roughly equal opposition, and get chased about half the distance by **PRC-42b Wasps or Hughes Stallions.**

⭐⭐ **What actually happened up there:** Ehran powers and heats Althain with a magically controlled geothermal system. The rebounding spell knocked him unconscious and the flash-over disrupted many of the spell structures he maintains — ⚠⚠ **and the eruption was the geothermal system venting itself to prevent a real one.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND FROM HERE ON, EHRAN IS RUNNING A TRAP.** *"He has gone to great lengths to let Harlequin believe that he, Ehran, was killed by the reflected spell. All evidence will indicate that no one is currently maintaining Althain, and that it is in extensive physical and magical disarray."*

The way in is a six-hour hike to fissures on the north slope, findable astrally by the residual magic leaking out of them — ⭐ because the illusion and confusion spells that normally keep tourists away are among the ones currently down. ⚠ Others are not.

⚠⚠ **The descent is the hardest terrain in the campaign** — *"some of the most frightening terrain this side of Hades,"* with lava passages reawakened and pools of blackened or almost white-hot rock. It ends at **a stone bridge one metre across, over a river of molten stone hundreds of metres below** — and mid-crossing, the back of the group is attacked by an **Embracer** [B12 Q5×3 S10 W4 R6, **9S2, +1 Reach**, ⚠ **dual-natured**].

⚠⚠ **The Embracer is a genuinely nasty piece of design.** It draws character after character into its grip, and shooting it while it holds someone is **+2 to the target number** — ⭐ *"and if he misses because of that modifier, **he will strike the character being hugged instead**."* ⚠ Charged by Ehran with guarding the bridge, **it fights to the death.**

Beyond it, a cleanly carved circular tunnel that **was not naturally formed**, its entrance protected by **a Ward no astral form can penetrate.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND ALTHAIN CHARGES A TOLL FOR MAGIC.** From the tunnel onward, any character attempting Astral Perception or Projection is buffeted by the emanations of powerful and disrupted magicks: **a 6M4 Stun attack per turn, and all Perception Tests at +6.** Elementals summoned or called inside operate at **+4 target modifier and are worth only half their Force**, and **Clairvoyance and similar scrying simply fail** in any area that is not "clean."

⭐⭐⭐ WELCOME TO ALTHAIN

And then, having crossed a lava river and fought a thing that hugs people to death, they walk into this:

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> *"You run your hand carefully over the **jewel-like surface of the tunnel wall**... you come upon a large room. **High walls and a ceiling that looks carved from gold-veined white marble** surround you. Ahead, a short stairway leads to a bronze and black metal door."*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ *"In front of the door stand **four creatures that, except for their garb, fit the description of the monkey-like paranormal critter known as a munchkin.** Each wears a knee-length* justaucorps *coat, richly embroidered doublet over a fine lace shirt, and tight, tailored breeches ending in leather cavalier boots... Two of them... wear **emerald green and ash**, respectively, and hold trays of **plump, fresh strawberries and tall, fluted glasses of champagne.**"*
>
> *"'**Prepared we have drinks of fine champagne and tastes of lush strawberries for our guests,**' he says in an odd, chirping accent. '**Welcome to Althain. Come. My master awaits within.**'"*

⭐ **The champagne and strawberries are the finest.** The four stewards are named **Emerald, Ash, Turquoise and Maroon**; a dozen more munchkins keep the place running, ⭐⭐ **each named for its function — "Cleaner," "First Cook," "Chambermaid," "Librarian."** Turquoise offers to take coats and hats and ⚠ **will not ask anyone to check a weapon.**

⚠⚠ **The hospitality is a security system.** Anyone who gets through the tunnel is either expected or powerful enough to have beaten the safeguards — and in the second case *"the presence of the munchkins might delay the unexpected visitor long enough for Ehran to take action."* ⚠ They are totally passive and will not resist if attacked; *"their deaths, however, will bring Cleaner and Junior Cleaner scurrying to, well, clean up."*

⚠⚠⚠ **Ehran knows the runners are coming. He stays out of sight to keep the charade running.**

THE HOUSE, AND WHAT IS IN IT

Maroon parks them in a modern waiting room — *"My master is busy at present, and he bids you wait here until he is not"* — and ⚠⚠ *"will return for them only when so instructed by Ehran, **an order that will never come.** The player characters can wait in that room **until hell freezes over** if they wish."*

⭐⭐ **That is the test, and it is the whole design of Althain: the adventure gives them nothing unless they get up and look.** A runner who follows Maroon watches the munchkin walk into the Great Hall, approach a twisted body on the floor, and say *"Master, they await you in the modern room."*

⚠⚠ **The body is not Ehran's.** Astral examination finds **no aura and no evidence of magical activity**, which *"should rouse his suspicions." "The body is not Ehran's, but that of a foolish member of the Young Elven Technologists who he decided was expendable — **Windtree, perhaps?**"* ⭐⭐ Which means the elegant sadist who tortured them in **3.3** may be lying dead on the floor as set dressing, and nobody will ever mention it.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN THE CLUES, WHICH ARE THE REASON THIS EPISODE EXISTS.**

In the Great Hall — white marble with much richer veins of gold, alcoves of large black-and-grey marble sculptures. ⭐⭐ *"Only one of the subjects is familiar to any runner. It is **a life-size rendering of a man whose face bears a distinct resemblance to HARLEQUIN'S,***

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including his face paint. *The garb of the man,* ***a multi-layered robe-cloak, is completely unfamiliar to the runners.*** *"* Above, chandeliers at the five points of a hexagon and a painted ceiling *"that looks like an astrological chart or diagram —* ***none of the symbols or letterings are recognizable.*** *"* Underfoot, an inlaid octagon of black and silver metals: ⚠ **a character with Magical Theory recognises some of the engraved symbols as possessing *ancient* magical power, and the majority not at all.**

In Ehran's suite, behind an invisible physical and mana barrier: a woman's portrait that **none of the runners recognise** — ☆ and above the fireplace, **a portrait of a man in the clothing of late-sixteenth-century Spain.** A **Perception (6)** notices the resemblance to Ehran the Scribe; ⚠ with only one or two successes *"the character will not recognize the resemblance* ***until the next time he sees Ehran*** *— even if it is the imitation Ehran sprawled on the floor of the Great Hall."*

And behind a secret door — Perception (10) or ultrasound, opened by touching both sides of an alcove at once, ☆ *"a feat the munchkins are unable to perform"* — **the workroom**, *"a researching magician's dream-come-true."* ⚠⚠ Much of it is beyond current magical science: *"the equipment and gear is fathomable,* ***but their applications are not.*** *"*

A magician may attempt **Magical Theory against a target of 20**, and ⚠⚠ ***no Karma Points may be used on the roll.*** One success:

> *"Ehran's research does* ***not*** *seem directed at determining an* ***effect from a cause, but vice versa. He is attempting to understand WHY certain magical-related effects occur.*** *His research also seems to be directed at* ***predicting certain effects that are physically and magically IMPOSSIBLE****... the expanse of Ehran's research will completely overwhelm the shadowrunner."*

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THERE ARE TWO DRAGONS ON THE FLOOR.**

A young dracoform and a wyvern, metres apart. The wyvern is in pieces on examining tables — ⚠ and a **Perception (6)** establishes that it *"was* ***NOT dissected. It was VIVISECTED, magically.*** *The difference? Dissection is performed on a* ***dead*** *creature, vivisection on a* ***live*** *one."*

⚠⚠⚠ **The dracoform is still alive.** A young Western dragon, immobilised by a spell and held behind a physical barrier that also keeps the runners from harming it. ☆ A magically targeted **Perception (8)** reveals **the barrier is unravelling from within.** *"It is impossible to tell how long it will take the spell to unravel, but the players may assume that it will occur at some* ***inconvenient time****."*

☆☆☆ **Ehran the Scribe — public intellectual, elven statesman, the reasonable one — cuts dragons open while they are alive.** The players found that out by picking a lock in an empty house, and no NPC will ever confirm it.

☆☆☆ FACE TO FACE

Harlequin arrives, and for about a minute he is not performing.

> *"Harlequin's mood is dark and his pace determined. Without so much as a glance, he passes you and stops less than a meter from Ehran's body.* ***He stares down at it, then kneels slowly, reaching out his left hand and laying it on Ehran's head. For a long while he says nothing.*** *'****He is as you found him?****' Harlequin says finally. You nod and again he remains silent for a long while. Then he stands up slowly,* ***clenching his***

> ***fists till the knuckles go white. Lifting his face to the ceiling, HARLEQUIN SCREAMS.***"

⭐ Then Maroon walks up to the corpse and announces that men have come from **the Land of Promise** to speak with it, and Harlequin's grief evaporates into dry contempt: *"Well,* ***you must give him points for trying.***"

⭐⭐⭐ **Ehran is standing in the doorway, grinning, dressed in duelling clothes of centuries long past, holding a swept-hilt rapier blade-up in each hand.** And he speaks first — ⚠⚠ **in a language that is not Elvish:**

> ***"Temeravilhas, Har'lea'quinn?... Que't destrui e't coton?"***
>
> *"Harlequin laughs, a dark, cold sound that does not alter his malicious grin. '****I wonder perhaps if your spirit is as dead as this*** **simulacrum** ***below me, Eh'he'ran. That damned tongue certainly is. Shall we find out?'*** ⚠⚠ ***With that, Harlequin reaches up and TEARS HIS LEFT EAR FROM HIS HEAD. It falls to the ground with a dull clatter. 'So be it!'*** *he cries as Ehran tosses him a sword.* ***They duel.***"

⭐⭐ **A runner is drafted as Ehran's second** — *"If this is to end it, it must be as it began. You!"* — and released a moment later with *"Your involvement is at an end. Go help your friends."* ⭐ As they close, Ehran swipes his blade twice through the air: ***"I'll have the other one as well, you know."*** *Harlequin laughs and executes a fine lunge.*

⭐⭐⭐ **What follows is** ***"a duel of the most exquisite swordsmanship any has ever seen"*** **— and the tell is buried in the description of it:** ***"So similar are their styles that an appropriately skilled observer would note that they probably had the same teacher."*** Partway through, **a shimmering sphere of gold engulfs both elves**; an **Astral Perception (8)** identifies it as a second, subtler contest of magical prowess running underneath the physical one.

And then it ends, in four sentences:

> *"Harlequin besieges Ehran with a brilliant series of moves and countermoves. Then, with a quick flick of his blade,* ***he removes Ehran's left ear.*** *Clutching his head, Ehran howls with rage and pain while Harlequin shouts joyously. Ehran points his blade at Harlequin and yells* ***'YOU HAVE NOT WON! WE ARE NOW MERELY EVEN!'*** *Harlequin turns toward his opponent,* ***bows grandly, blows him a kiss, throws his rapier to one of the player characters****, and then takes a step backward. As he does,* ***his image shifts prismatically and he disappears.*** *Ehran howls again, takes a step forward, and disappears in the same manner."*

⭐⭐ WHAT ARIEL TELLS THEM, AND WHY IT REFRAMES EVERYTHING

Ariel may appear to warn them off interfering — *"this challenge is a matter of blood"* — and if pressed she gives up exactly three things:

- ⚠⚠⚠ **that the current friction between the two men stems from** ***Ehran having cut off Harlequin's ear*** **in a fairly recent duel** — *"recent, at least, by certain standards"*;
- ⚠ **that she, Ehran and even Harlequin are much older than they appear**;
- ⭐⭐ **that Althain reminds Ehran of the place he lived as a child. She will not name the place.**

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⭐⭐⭐ **So that is what the last three in-game years were.** Eight jobs, four continents, a suborbital hijacking, a torture cell, a kidnapping, a partial volcanic eruption and a shattered femur — **to get one ear back.** And the duel ends level: *"We are now merely even."*

⭐ **Her motive for helping is not kindness.** *"She sees them as **potential tools against Ehran in the future**... She is able to take these actions because **none of Ehran's orders prevent her.**"* ⚠ She warns them off looting — *"these are Ehran's heirlooms"* — and if they complain about not being paid, *"Ariel will **sneer disdainfully** and then remind them of the sword Harlequin tossed just before he vanished."*

THE FOUR ELVES FROM THE TÍR, AND THE WAY OUT

⚠⚠ **Tír Tairngire has sent people, and the High Prince's reason is pure statecraft.** He has heard of a challenge involving Ehran and *"some renegade Elven sorcerer named Harlequin,"* and the magical incident at St Helens has alarmed him: ***"The High Prince prefers that the outside world remain ignorant of the internal politics of Elves. Any hint of dissent might provide political leverage to one of the national or corporate powers."***

The four are the *Bratach Gheal*, the White Banner — the High Prince's personal guard — and they are drawn well enough to be worth playing individually:

	Who	What they are for
Allaech	Leader; physical adept, **Initiate Grade 3**; born in Phoenix, Tír-raised	Carries a **Princely Order** summoning both elves before the High Prince. ⚠ What he sees in Althain is *"at once intriguing, astounding, and frightening"*
Aimsir	Combat mage, **Initiate Grade 2, Magic 14**	Believes Ehran is one of the voices that will lift the elven people out of the underclass. ⭐ Awed by Althain, *"which contains so many things she has never before seen"*
⚠⚠ **Sruth**	**A ringer** — a plant from the Tír secret police, whose elite are the **Paladins**, embedded to watch the Banner itself	⚠ *"If he survives the visit to Althain, what he sees and hears could prove **damaging, or at the very least embarrassing, to Ehran** in the future."* Especially angry to find non-elves present
⭐⭐ **Taelech**	The young one, and the point of the whole delegation	As a child in Dallas he imagined Tír Tairngire as the paradise for elves. ⚠⚠ *"Now he has been there enough years to see that it is far from the 'Land of Promise.'"* He suspects **a hidden agenda among certain members of the Tír hierarchy, Ehran included** — and he will carry what he saw here home with him

⭐⭐ **And the language, one last time:** ***"the language that Ehran and Harlequin speak to each other... is not Elvish. No one, not even Allaech, has ever heard it before."***

⚠ **Once both elves vanish, Allaech gets an idea:** *"Wait! You saw what happened. **I can take YOU back to the High Prince!**"* ⭐ *"They can reason it out or they can fight it out. Their choice."*

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⚠⚠ **Then Ehran's real security arrives** — the remnants of the Future team plus elven street samurai and combat mages — and ☆ *"the intent is for the Tír Elves and the runners to **team up**"* against them.

☆☆☆ **AND THE GAMEMASTER HAS A BUTTON.** The barrier on the young dragon has been unravelling since the spell duel, *"and he could become free right about now if the gamemaster so wishes. The Dragon's first action will be to escape — in his confused and pained state of mind, that means going **up**. Directly above him is the Main Hall..."* ☆☆ *"**A crazed Dragon suddenly breaking through the floor in the midst of the two groups might just be enough to defuse the situation.**"* [B13/5 Q8×3 **S32** W7(10), **9D3, +2 Reach**, Flame Projection; ⚠ so crazed *"he ignores the effects of all injuries"* for target modifiers.]

☆ The book's closing advice: *"Let us hope that heads ultimately prevail and that the runners realize it's time to leave. **After all, do they really want to be here when Ehran gets back?**"*

BRINGING IT HOME

⚠ **Althain is gone.** Ehran reactivates his masking and illusion spells and *"as far as the runners are concerned, **it has vanished from the face of the earth.**"* They can find the caverns again. They will never find the chasm, the bridge or the tunnel.

☆☆ **The sword is the pay.** The rapier Harlequin threw is a sixteenth-century heirloom worth about **¥100,000** — ⚠ but their usual fixer cannot move it and will offer roughly **fifteen per cent of real value.** ☆ *"If the runners are foolish enough to do this, they should see a newsvid report about a rare rapier being sold at auction for **millions**."* A better buyer exists: a reclusive weapons collector who is a virtual-reality programmer for **UCAS Data Systems, holed up in their compound in Denver.**

☆☆ **And the news, over the following months:** *Mankind Revealed* is delayed six months because **Ehran is ill** and cannot make promotional appearances. Within six months he is back in the limelight, fit and hale — ☆☆☆ **and sporting two ears.**

☆ Relations afterwards are *"neutral, but reserved."* Ehran has ordered no retaliation, *"again, the rules of chal'han"* — ⚠ which *"does not mean that members of Ehran's entourage or YET will bend over backward to thank the runners for screwing up their boss's life."*

☆☆☆ **AND THEN, A MONTH LATER, THE POSTCARD. END THE EPISODE ON IT.**

> *"One of the runners will receive a custom photo holocard mailed from **Phoenix, Pueblo Council**. The photo shows the city's downtown area at night. Clearly visible is the figure of **Harlequin bowing grandly to the camera.** If the characters examine the photo closely enough, they will notice another figure in the background, slightly out of focus, that could be **Jane Foster**. She seems to be talking to **an old, short ork carrying a soccer ball**. The back of the card reads: **'MY GOD, IT'S HOT. WISH YOU WERE HERE. -H.'**"*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **The answer to the question they have been asking since 1.4** — who was hiring them, and for what. ⚠ **Delivered by the man himself, in person, and still only half of it.**
- ☆☆ **A sixteenth-century rapier worth ¥100,000**, which is their entire fee for the chapter, and a Denver lead for selling it properly.

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- ⭐⭐⭐ **Whatever they found in Althain** — a statue of Harlequin in clothing from no known century, a ceiling chart in an unreadable script, floor-symbols of *ancient* power, a portrait of Ehran painted four hundred years ago, and **a live dragon in a cage in his private workroom.**
- ⭐ **The knowledge that Ehran vivisects dragons.** No proof, no witness, and nobody to tell.
- ⭐⭐ **Jane Foster, alive and free of him** — the spell lock that tracked her since childhood is destroyed, at the cost of her femur.
- ⚠⚠ **Four elves from Tír Tairngire who now know their faces**, including a secret policeman and a young idealist coming apart.
- **Between 8 and 16 Karma each**, for three years of work.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Harlequin owes them nothing and knows their names**	**4.6**, immediately — ⚠ he comes back, and this time he asks
⭐⭐⭐ **Ehran is alive, humiliated, and *even***	**4.6**, and every Tír thread after it. ⚠ *"We are now merely even"* is not a man who has finished
⭐⭐ **Ehran's research — cause from effect, and effects that are impossible**	**4.6**, where the players learn what kind of effect he might be trying to predict
⚠⚠ **The young Western dragon, if it got out**	🔪 **Open.** A dragon that owes them nothing and remembers Ehran's face; ⭐ the dragon ladder runs **1.3 → 2.1 → 2.5 → 3.7 → Season 8** and this fits anywhere on it
⭐⭐ **Taelech's disillusionment**	The Tír ladder — **1.6 → 2.5 → 2.10 → 4.2 → here.** ⚠ A guardsman who has stopped believing is worth more later than any fight in this episode
⚠ **Sruth, and what a Paladin now knows about Althain**	🔪 Open; **leverage over Ehran that the players created and do not control**
⭐ **The Denver collector**	A ready-made side job, and a legitimate excuse to visit Denver
⭐⭐ **Jane Foster, alive, in Phoenix, with Harlequin**	⚠ Unresolved on purpose. **She is Ehran's daughter and she is now with his enemy**
⭐⭐⭐ **The language nobody has ever heard**	**4.6** — and it is never translated

⭐⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — THIS IS THE DENSEST EPISODE IN THE CAMPAIGN AND YOU MUST NOT SPEND ANY OF IT.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Four separate Fourth World tells land in this one session, and every single one is delivered as scenery.** That is the design. **Point at none of them.**

① **The language.** Ehran and Harlequin speak to each other in a tongue that is **not Elvish, and that no elf present has ever heard** — including a Tír Tairngire initiate and the High Prince's own guard. ⭐⭐ **This is the single best correspondence in the Shadowrun half of the project**, because it is a *negative* clue: the book itself makes a point of telling you what it is not. ⚠⚠ **Never translate it. Never let an NPC identify it. Do not let a Knowledge test touch it.**

② **"Instruction from the same teacher"** — said twice, once by Harlequin about the spell lock and once by the narration about their swordsmanship. ⭐ Two men trained by one teacher, in a discipline neither will name, in a century neither will admit to.

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③ **The statue in the Great Hall** — a life-size figure with Harlequin's face *and his face paint*, in **a multi-layered robe-cloak completely unfamiliar to the runners**. ⚠⚠ In this campaign's terms that is **Caimbeul, last Knight of the Crying Spire**, in the garb of an order destroyed before the kaers opened. ☆☆☆ **Ehran keeps a statue of him. It is the only sculpture in the room anyone recognises, and it is in the enemy's own house.** Describe the cloak precisely and move on.

④ ☆☆☆ **AND THE BEST LINE, WHICH IS ARIEL'S.** *"Althain reminds Ehran of the place he lived as a child.* ***She will not name the place.***" ⚠⚠⚠ **She will not name it because it is not in this world.** A gold-veined marble hall inside a mountain, with an unreadable star-chart on the ceiling and ancient symbols set into the floor, is *"where he grew up"* — ☆☆ **and the players are standing in a reconstruction of it without being told that is what it is.**

⚠⚠ **The one-way rule applies with full force here.** Under the play order, the table has finished at most Earthdawn seasons 1–3 by now. **Nothing in this episode may be phrased as a callback.** Plant the cloak, the chart, the symbols and the unnamed childhood home as *strange things in a rich man's house* — ☆ and let a Fourth World session, later, do the recognising.

⚠ **Ehran's live dragon is NOT crossover material and should not be dressed as any.** It is a monstrous thing an immortal is doing in the Sixth World, in the present, and it is stronger as exactly that.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE WHOLE ARC. This is the collection point for every thread since episode 1.4, and most of them arrive without anyone announcing them.**

Set up in	What lands here
1.4	☆☆☆ **The genealogy file with one deleted record.** The woman in her late twenties from a Midwest regional subset is standing in the room, and Harlequin kisses her hand
1.4 → 2.8 → 4.1	☆☆ **The jester.** A rapier in a case, a wax seal, *"the Laughing One"* in Amazonia — and now **"the Laughing Man,"** who cleared the gangs out of Tarislar and has lived there a year. ⚠ **Fourth appearance, and the first time he is in the room**
4.1	☆☆☆ **"My dear once-brother"** → the Catullus epigraph, *at a brother's grave.* ⚠ Do not connect them out loud; they are three episodes apart and identical in meaning
4.3	☆☆☆ **The spell lock in Jane Foster's thigh** — ⚠⚠ **it shatters here, and takes the bone with it**
4.3	☆ **The deferred Karma segment point** from chapter seven, which prints no table because it is collected in this one
3.3	☆☆☆ **"Their real employer."** A torturer made them say the name out loud in a cell. ⚠ **Now they climb forty flights of stairs to shake his hand**
3.3	⚠⚠ **Ariel returns** — and the woman who oversaw their torture is now the most helpful NPC in the episode, ☆ for entirely self-interested reasons she states plainly

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3.3	⚠ **Lancelot Windtree, possibly, face-up on the floor of the Great Hall as a decoy.** ☆ **Say nothing at all.** Let one player recognise a corpse
2.3 / 2.8 / 4.1	☆☆ **The relay.** A manuscript, six ear tips, a tome, a frontispiece, back-door codes, a flower, a chip, a woman — **the wall in black marker itemises all of it in verse**, and the players realise they have been the delivery mechanism for a poem
1.4 → here	☆☆ **The rapier motif closes.** It began as an antique in a display case in a publisher's office. ⚠ **It ends with Harlequin throwing one to a player character as their fee**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Read the Catullus line aloud, cold, before anything else, and do not explain it.** ⚠ If a player translates it, that is their moment and it cost you nothing.
- ☆☆ **Make them climb.** Four beats, one per ten storeys, exactly as written — the ash, Jane's face changing, the Nietzsche graffiti and the smear, then the guitar. ⚠ **The stairs are the reason the meeting lands.** Do not summarise them.
- ☆ **Play the blind elf with full sight.** He tracks faces, he nods at the right person, and nobody comments.
- ☆☆☆ **Actually make the players hum.** Out loud, at the table, while you fuss about the pitch and eventually settle for what you can get. ⚠ **It is the funniest thing in eight chapters and it is thirty seconds before the worst thing in eight chapters.** The contrast is the point.
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let Harlequin explain himself.** *"Are you certain you wish to know?"* is not a prompt for more; it is the whole answer. ☆ **He is old friends with a man he is destroying, and that is all anybody gets.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not prompt anyone to help Jane Foster.** The module makes it an unspoken test for the third time in the campaign, after the girl in chapter two and Iggy in chapter five. ☆ **If nobody moves, let Harlequin order it, and let him be furious.**
- ☆☆☆ **The duel is a cutscene. Run it as one.** No initiative, no dice, no interference — Ariel is there specifically to prevent interference. ⚠ **Read it, do not adjudicate it.** A player who tries to intervene is stopped by a woman who tells them this is a matter of blood.
- ☆☆ **Althain rewards curiosity and punishes patience, which is the exact reverse of the usual instruction.** ⚠ **A table that politely waits in the modern room gets nothing, forever, and that is a legitimate outcome.** Let the waiting be boring on purpose, and let one player get restless.
- ⚠⚠ **Do not stiffen Althain and do not hint at the secret door.** ☆ The workroom is the best thing in the episode and it is allowed to be missed. **A group that finds a live dragon in a cage has earned it; a group that does not has still had a good session.**
- ☆ **Use the dragon as your defuse button, exactly as the book suggests**, if the standoff with the Tír guard turns into a fight nobody can win.
- ⚠ **Let them sell the sword badly if they want to.** ☆ Then run the auction newsvid. **A hundred thousand nuyen of consequence for one lazy decision is cheap teaching.**
- ☆☆☆ **Mail the postcard between sessions.** ⚠ Not read aloud at the table if you can avoid it — put it in a message, an email, a scrap of paper handed to one player. **The campaign's last image should arrive when nobody is braced for it.**

4.6 · Harlequin's Back — SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Harlequin's Back*** (FASA #7317, SR2, © 1994) — **a whole campaign book, not an episode.** ⚠ Requires ***The Grimoire, Second Edition***. Printed for 2055; ⭐ **nothing in it depends on a dated world event, so run it in 2056 exactly as written.**

⚠⚠ **It is a sequel and it assumes the table played the original.** Run 1.4 → 4.5 first, as this campaign does. Without them, **the two best beats in the book are dead on arrival** — Harlequin asking for *his sword* back, and recognising Ariel Nasir at the ball.

⭐ **Team Karma, by chapter:** The Bridge Part One **4** · *Aftermath* **8** · *A Fistful of Karma* **8** · *By the Sword* **10** · *The Impossible Dream* **8**, ⭐ plus **4** more for holding the hood, the perch and the metal, and for asking the Architect to make the cage · *The Songbird* **2** · The Bridge Part Two **1**, *"just for being there. (Thanks for playing!)"* · *The Masquerade* **8** · The Bridge Part Three **8**.

⚠⚠⚠ **Every one of those is all-or-nothing.** The book repeats it chapter after chapter: help the people, or *"they get nothing."*

⭐⭐⭐ **And for those who stay at the end: add a whopping additional ten per cent to all Team Karma awards in any adventure, for a year and a day.**

> ✎ **READ THIS BEFORE YOU SCHEDULE IT. Four hard gates, and none of them are negotiable.**
>
> ① **It is one continuous night and it cannot be interleaved.** Unlike its predecessor there is no seam to drop another run into, and the team cannot walk away mid-book without failing. ⚠⚠ **Book the sessions as a block.**
>
> ② **The party needs at least one female and one male character.** *By the Sword* is built on it — *"no man may set foot on the Isle of Apples and live"* — ⭐ and **Jane Foster covers the gap** if the team has no woman in it.
>
> ③ ⚠⚠⚠ **NO ASTRAL PROJECTION, AT ANY POINT.** The book says so in capitals: it *"will quickly unbalance the story and defeat the purpose of the astral quest by revealing too much information."*
>
> ④ **Deckers and riggers have the worst time in the book** and you should tell their players so in advance. On the outcropping a decker may bring a deck and a rigger may command one small drone; after that they get a false Matrix in a Limbo Room, a Victorian ENGINE run as a mini-quest, and not much else. ⚠ Magic is crippled or transformed differently in every single Place, so the magicians are being levelled too — **this is a book about who your characters are, not what they own.**

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **START SEEDING IT ONE OR TWO RUNS EARLY.** The *Foreshadows* chapter is not a first scene, it is ambient weirdness to be woven into unrelated adventures — *"the key words here are odd, spooky, weird, and foreboding."*

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- **Every animal behaves wrongly.** Guard dogs trained to attack sit and stare with their tongues out. Birds explode out of a tree. A whole street of animals goes silent and watches them pass.
- ⭐⭐ **Their luck turns, mechanically and without explanation.** *"Lower all target numbers by 1... **Don't tell them why, just do it. This will completely freak out any rules-lawyer players.**"* Refresh the Team Karma Pool for no reason. Hand them a spare success or two exactly when it helps.
- **Everyone starts treating them with more respect** — friends, strangers, enemies, spirits — *"the players cannot figure out what they're doing differently or how to keep it going."*
- ⚠ **An obese, badly made-up clown holding three black balloons laughs hysterically at them** from across the street. If chased he hikes up his pantaloons and runs, giggling. **They cannot catch him.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And they dream.** A raven-haired woman looking into a pool that reflects a young elven warrior in silver-and-blue crystal armour, struck by a black arrow. A cybered runner on an operating table, a surgeon with **a single black diamond painted above his left eye** asking *"how can you hope to save her when you have no blood?"* An ork mother who sees, every time the dream repeats, exactly what will happen if she saves her child — and saves it every time. ⭐ **And three clue-dreams that tell them what to fetch:** a broken piece of metal melting and rising as a **cage**; two hands, one male and one female, slipping a white leather **hood** over a singing bird; and a black-haired woman in red silk crouched on a long white piece of wood — **the perch** — crying and trying to sing, and making no sound.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE BEST REUSABLE DEVICE IN THE BOOK: *LESS THAN TWENTY QUESTIONS*.** Each runner is approached on the street by an attractive stranger who asks nine questions. ⚠⚠ **The players answer in private, without hesitation, and the answers are the complete truth about their characters — and if they have no answer and invent one, the invention becomes the truth.**

> What's your favourite colour? · The last time you wore a costume for fun, what was it? · **Under what circumstances, if any, would you sacrifice your life?** · What's the best thing you've ever done? · What's your favourite number? · Which great figure from myth, literature or the media do you identify with? · **What's the worst thing you've ever done?** · **Under what circumstances, if any, would you betray your friends?** · **What manner of dying do you fear most?**

⚠⚠ **The answers are used against them, starting almost immediately.**

THE MAN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE

⭐⭐⭐ **The book opens on Harlequin alone, drunk, unpainted, in front of a dying fire** — *"for the first time in almost as long as he could remember, he lacked a cause or a direction."* A black-robed figure with no face, only churning smoke, is standing in the room, its robe *"covered with the dust of a thousand roads."*

He tries to banish it. It answers: ⚠⚠ ***"It has been a long time since those words were last spoken, Har'lea'quinn. And this is not the first time you have used them against me. They did not work then, either."***

It names itself — *"I am Deceit. I am Treachery. I am Betrayal."* — and then it names **him**: ⭐⭐⭐ ***"the last Knight of the Crying Spire."*** *"Have you forgotten the horror?"* — ***"The Northern Islands are gone. Forgotten dust of a forgotten world."*** — ***"As all shall be, Har'lea'quinn, as all shall be."***

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Its instruction is two words: ⭐⭐ *"**Destroy the bridge.**"* Its answer to *how* is two more: *"**Thayla's Voice.**"* And its warning: *"Travel lightly. Their allies already wander the netherworlds... **They will smell you coming.**"* ⚠ *"Move quickly, Laughing Man; **they have built their bridge before.**"*

Then it steps into the fire and burns away, Jane Foster bursts in with a pistol, and Harlequin walks backward up the staircase grinning: ⭐ ***"Why, my dear — Harlequin's back. Can't you tell?"***

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE ENEMY IS — THE REVEAL THE WHOLE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN WITHHOLDING

This is the book where Shadowrun names the Horrors. Harlequin calls them **the Enemy**, and lays it out plainly:

- **Physical creatures, not spirits** — *"highly magical, terribly vicious creatures lacking any remorse, pity, conscience, or care. **They exist solely to consume.**"* The primitive ones eat matter. ⚠⚠ *"The more intelligent and powerful creatures — **the truly dangerous ones** — seek to consume less tangible things like emotions, pain, desire, hopes, and fears."*
- **Hundreds of thousands of them, perhaps millions.** ⚠ *"(Meta)human civilization has never successfully stood against them... **In 2055, however, humankind doesn't stand a chance.**"* ⭐ *"Only the fraggin' dragons would have any hope of living through it."*
- **They invaded before** — most recently *"during Harlequin's youth"* — and civilisation survived only **by hiding behind powerful magic until the mana level dropped below what the creatures could survive.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE GREAT GHOST DANCE IS WHY THEY ARE COMING EARLY.** Howling Coyote's ritual was **blood magic on a continental scale**, and the life energy spent left a permanent **spike** in the mana level at the site — *"higher than it will be on most of the planet for a thousand years."* At the spike the Enemy are closer to this world than anywhere else, and it shortens their crossing **"from thousands of years to a mere few."** They should have been two and a half millennia away. **They arrive within the decade.**
- ⚠ **A few are already here** — through smaller temporary spikes, and through summoning rituals by *"ignorant fools"* who mostly paid for it. ⭐ **Perhaps a score, in 2055.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE BOOK ANSWERS THE QUESTION THE PLAYERS HAVE BEEN ASKING SINCE SEASON THREE, ON THE PAGE, IN CHARACTER.** Asked point-blank whether the insect spirits are the Enemy:

> *"**The invae? Not hardly. Just a pesky nuisance, those things.** The Enemy aren't true spirits like the bugs... the Great Ghost Dance only accelerated their appearance by a couple hundred years. **Not that they're much of a threat anymore.**"*

⚠⚠ And then, flatly: ***"the Enemy will gleefully consume all the bugs they can find when the time comes."***

THE ROAD, THE FERRYMAN, AND THE PRICE OF ADMISSION

A storm — the Worst Storm of the Century — breaks over Seattle, and scattered across the city every runner falls asleep at roughly the same hour.

They wake on a dirt road through a still forest. ⚠ Leave the road and you reappear on the other side of it. Spells cast fine **and do nothing**. Guns and cyberware work and accomplish nothing. Nature spirits do not answer; elementals appear only to say they are *"forbidden to reveal what is happening"* and cannot be compelled.

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⭐⭐⭐ **The road ends at a black river, a torchlit dock, and a glass-bottomed tourist boat with "Aqua Park" in faded block letters on the side.** The boatman's hood is full of nothing.

⚠⚠ **He calls each runner by their real name — not their street name** — and brands them by naming a particularly nefarious deed. ⭐ **This is what the nine questions were for.** Each runner hears the voice of a long-dead loved one, *"most effective if each runner feels some guilt about that individual's demise."*

He cannot be beaten. Anyone who tries is dumped in the river and fished out dripping.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND HIS TEST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DICE ROLL OF THE SEASON.** The gamemaster picks one skill or Attribute that exemplifies each character and devises a test of it: a single roll against **Target Number 15**, ⚠⚠ **with no Dice Pool of any kind. Successes × 3 is that character's entire personal Karma Pool for the rest of the quest.** ⚠⚠⚠ **They do not get their normal personal pool and they do not get their normal Team pool. This is all there is** — and nobody tells them that.

⚠ **Failure bars nobody:** *"Despite your failure, despite the fact that you are not worthy of the tasks before you... **I am forbidden to deny you passage.**"* ⭐ As the boat pulls away, a woman in a shimmering robe waves from the dock and a spray of coloured threads falls from her hand. **That is Fate, and they cannot speak to her.**

Then they wake in a minivan crossing the southwestern desert, Harlequin driving, Jane riding shotgun. ⭐ The van is *a representation of the journey*, not a vehicle: the doors will not open, the windows will not open, the lighter does not work, the glove compartment is empty — **but the air conditioning works and a suede German shepherd bobs on the dashboard.**

⭐⭐ **The destination is a dead circle of ground twenty metres across where nothing grows.** Harlequin paces it out, stops at the exact centre, and raises a small globe of silver light that casts no shadows. Standing in it **doubles a shaman's Magic and halves everyone else's**; ⚠ astrally perceiving there is a **5D Stun attack resisted by Willpower with no Dice Pool.**

> *"This is where they broke the spirit, pardon the pun, of the good ol' U.S. of A. This is where they danced the Big One, the Great Ghost Dance. **And this is where we start.**"*

THE BRIDGE, AND THE LEGEND

⭐⭐ **The geography is the argument.** A strip of land a few hundred metres wide between two bottomless pits, under a colourless sky. **The Chasm** is the gulf the Enemy must cross. **The outcropping** is the spike the Ghost Dance made, jutting more than two-thirds of the way over it. **The Bridge** is already kilometres long, lancing out from the far side, swarmed by numberless figures working *"like so many ants."* It is built *"of the bones and spirit of their own kind and those they've vanquished."*

⚠⚠ **Six things come over the rocks** — mistaken at first for giant spiders, until the legs turn out to be furred tentacles and the armoured bodies turn out to have **once been human.** *"Their terrible stench reaches you a heartbeat before they do."* ⭐ **The design brief is stated outright: this attack is meant to frighten, not to defeat.** *"Frighten them bad. Feel free to fudge numbers to ensure none of the player characters die here."*

⚠ **Harlequin goes down hard, twitching and frothing**, and the book is explicit that he must not die — ⭐ *"but let the players worry that Harlequin may be killed, which would leave them on*

their own." ⚠⚠ Healing him has a tell nobody explains: ***for any Heal or Treat spell, treat Harlequin's Essence as an 8. Do not explain this; merely present it as information.***

☆☆☆ **THEN HE TELLS THEM THE LEGEND, AND IT IS THE BEST-WRITTEN THING IN EITHER HARLEQUIN BOOK.**

Ages ago **Thayla**, a queen of great beauty and greater heart, ruled a green valley between two mountain ranges. Each morning she greeted the sun with a **song**, and *"nothing foul or dark could prosper in her land — her voice was too pure for such abominations to bear."* A black army came; she sang; it broke and fled — ⚠ **but one soldier slowed, and for the briefest moment, listened.**

He came back. He kept coming back, **falling back last each time so that he could hear the Song**, advancing a little further each morning until he could see her on the terraces. ⚠⚠ *"As he listened,* ***blood flowed from his ears and his skin blistered from the powerful purity of her voice — but he would not turn aside.***"

Then one night he walked into her citadel and **sat at the foot of her bed.** Her guards could not move him; her sorcerers could not banish him; her song could not drive him out. ☆☆ So she ignored him — and he stood at her side without speaking, ran alongside her horses, stood near while she slept, and **every morning cried tears of blood and fire at the pain and the joy her voice gave him.**

The land began to die of his presence. She asked him to leave, and he spoke for the first time, in a voice *"like dried leaves blown on the autumn wind"*: ☆☆☆ ***"But I do not wish to leave. Your beauty is like none I have ever seen."*** — *"But you cannot stay. Your presence is destroying my land and my people."* — ***"I care not for your land or its people. I care only for you."***

☆☆☆ **So she left, and took him with her, and gave her people her voice instead:** ***"I will leave, but my voice will remain."*** Her sorcerers found the finest songbird in the land and put the Song into it at sunrise. **The bird sang and the black army trembled and could not enter.** ⚠⚠ And when the sorcerers turned to thank their queen, **she and her dark shadow were gone.**

THE FIVE PLACES

☆ **The charge:** find the Voice. Harlequin cannot come — he has his own leg of the quest, and must prepare the outcropping. ⚠⚠ His briefing is the instruction manual for the whole book:

> ***"Each Place you go, the rules will differ… you may not even be yourselves in some of those Places. But no matter what happens, no matter what you see, always remember the Place is causing the changes… your sharpest weapon will always be your wit and cunning. Pay attention, listen, look for the patterns."*** And: ***"You must do more than look and listen; you must see."***

☆☆ **They need three things before the bird: a cage, a perch, and a hood** — and Harlequin does not know where or in what form they will appear. Each Place tests them, and passing the test earns the item.

#	The Place	The test, and what it yields
1	***Aftermath*** — the Pacific Northwest, generations after a cataclysm. The tiny **Enclave** against the rival **Collective**	☆ **The hood**, held by the Collective's leader **Oscuro**. ⚠ Harlequin appears as **Leroy**, the Enclave's leader; Thayla as **Talia**, his wife. The chapter ends in

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		Sacrifice
2	***A Fistful of Karma*** — the 1880s American West crossed with neo-Victorian tech and magic; the town of **Valley Hope** against the strip-miner **Mr. Trey**	☆ **The perch** — ⚠ not obviously a perch: it is **a piece of bone**, and it must be taken from Trey the hard way. Thayla is **Celia, a deaf saloon singer**; Harlequin is the reluctant sheriff **Bergamot**. ☆ The only chapter with proper Legwork
3	***By the Sword*** — an Arthurian England **where the Grail Quest never happened.** Lancelot betrayed Arthur for lust, Arthur died alone, and eternal winter holds until the murdered Spring Champion is reborn	Find *"the sword that ran through the best and finest Knight of the Round Table"* — ⚠ *"that knight may not be the person they expect to find."* The sword is broken, and mending it needs **redemption bought with blood.** ⚠⚠ **Requires a female character**
4	***The Impossible Dream*** — pure metaphor: a people who spend their whole lives building a **Tower** to an unreachable Heaven	☆ The **Foreman** holds the **Maiden** hostage to paralyse the **Architect**. Free her and free the people, and the reward is to **ask the Architect to build the cage**
5	***The Songbird*** — where the bird waits, and where they learn what became of Thayla's land	⚠⚠ **And that the bird's song, without Thayla's will behind it, is not strong enough**

⚠⚠⚠ **The villain of four of those five is the same man under four names**, and the players are meant to notice before anyone says so.

☆☆☆ THE FAILURE IN THE MIDDLE — DO NOT SOFTEN IT

They come back to an outcropping that **smells of blood.** A battle has been fought here in their absence; body parts are scattered over the broken ground; ⚠ *"one of the bodies — it might have had wings once — still burns with greenish-blue flames."* **The Bridge has grown.** Harlequin is battered, **his left arm in a crude sling**, and Frosty rushes to check him and gets brushed off *"as a child might an overprotective mother."*

☆☆ He listens to their account and **interprets none of it for them.** ⚠⚠ And when someone points out that a Harlequin figure and a Thayla figure appeared together in Place after Place, ***"he appears troubled that in three of the four Places they visited, the Harlequin figure had some sort of relationship with the Thayla figure. If pressed, Harlequin dismisses this apparent link as 'typical metaphoric image-role confusion' and refuses all further comment."***

Then he opens the cage. ☆ **The Songbird sits on his finger and gazes intently at his face, and he avoids its eyes.**

> *"Its voice is purer, clearer, sweeter than any music you have ever heard before. The sound of it washes away all the pent-up anger, frustration, hatred, and despair you have all built up throughout your lives...* ***Jane Foster drops to her knees, sobbing. Harlequin stares at the bird while tears of pain or joy, or perhaps both, stream down his face."***
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ *"On the other side of the Chasm, the frenetic activity of the creatures slows and then stops as they listen.* ***After a moment, the creatures go back to work."***

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⭐⭐⭐ **Harlequin screams and falls to the ground.** *"You were right. Thayla's city fell because her voice alone was not strong enough to keep them at bay…* ***We must find Thayla and bring her here.****"*

⚠⚠ **The book's staging note is explicit and you should obey it:** *"****Raise their expectations of success*** *as Harlequin prepares the Songbird's ritual. When the singing fails to work,* ***let the runners wallow in despair and defeat before reminding them that their world can still be saved.****"*

THE MASQUERADE, AND THE MAN BEHIND ALL OF IT

A forbidding Victorian mansion, and a masquerade ball at which the runners are expected. Lord **Umberley** is holding Thayla with the help of his brother **Nacht**, and has arranged the evening so that the runners fail — ⭐⭐ **not knowing that some of the great powers of the metaplanes, totems among them, have come to the ball to watch how this ends.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And then the finale, which the book introduces in six words:** ***"This is the big finale. Go to town with it, chummer."***

They step back onto the outcropping into a stench they recognise. Dozens of small figures. **The edge is covered in blood.** A man kneels in it, and before they can react he **drives a black-bladed dagger into the heart of a young boy lying in front of him.** The blood **catches fire as it sprays**, and the ground ripples as the blood magic tears into the Place.

> *"The man turns toward you, and you recognize him.* ***He is Oscuro, Trey, the Foreman, the Warden from Thayla's tower, and Lord Umberley — or rather, they are him.****"*

⚠⚠ Beside him, a three-metre lattice of bone and stretched sinew with **Harlequin hanging upside down in it, stripped and beaten nearly raw.** At its foot sit **a dozen drugged children in white robes.** Ten creatures turn to look. And the man licks blood off his arm, staring at Thayla: *"****Kill them. Except the girl. I have plans for her.****"*

Six Crawlers and four Toads, all of which fight to the death without regard for their own existence. ⚠ **Darke's sacrifices have already raised the background count to 3, and every two further sacrifices raise it by another point** — ⭐ so **the fight gets harder the longer they ignore him.** Smart runners go for Darke first, and when he falls his minions scatter into the cracks and hide, *"apparently waiting for something."*

⭐ **They can cut Harlequin down.** Healing wakes him, ⚠ but he is far too badly hurt to do anything but give advice. **And the surviving children can be spoken to** — barely, because they are drugged — ⚠⚠ *"****they speak the form of Spanish common in 2055 with a Mexican/Aztlan dialect. The players are free to surmise from this what they wish.****"*

⭐⭐⭐ THAYLA'S QUESTION — THE BEST ENDING IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

She is ready to sing. Before she does, she asks the runners one question:

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"****What happens when you leave?****"*

⚠⚠ It is an excellent question and nobody in the fiction can answer it. The Enemy know where the outcropping is. **Because Darke was human, the next attack will come from the physical world — the same way the runners did** — so it will be easier to find, not harder. What stops them simply killing her?

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⚠⚠⚠ **Neither Harlequin nor Jane can answer.** ☆ *"**The player characters must figure out and offer the obvious solution — someone will have to stay behind to protect Thayla.**"* And the book is careful about why it has to come from them: *"Harlequin cannot force any of them to remain, **nor would such a solution immediately occur to him. (He is far too self-centered.)**"*

⚠ **Nothing compels them.** Her singing alone will hold the Enemy; it just will not stop the human allies. **They are free to leave her and hope.**

If the debate drags, she ends it:

> *"**You must decide now. I am going to sing, and those of you who remain here when I start will never be able to leave. Go now or stay.**"*

☆ **Then the gamemaster gives them one minute.** ⚠⚠ *"If the decision to stay or go is not unanimous, **Harlequin goes with the majority group and Jane Foster with the minority. Their parting is awkward, at best.**"*

And then she sings. Her voice surges across the Chasm and ripples over the Bridge, *"sending the creatures on it scuttling away with screams of pain and terror."* The area brightens. A circle of power opens around her, and at its edge **dozens of faint figures appear** — ☆☆ ***"any shaman swears he or she sees his totem standing there, and any particularly religious characters see beings or forms appropriate to their faith."*** The circle expands to engulf the outcropping and everyone still standing on it in an all-encompassing warmth, the light blinds them, and they wake up in their own beds in Seattle.

☆☆☆ ***"All the runners needed to do was commit themselves to self-sacrifice for the powers that be to acknowledge their heroism."***

⚠ **Anyone who left through the chalk door also wakes up at home — and feels cold and alone.**

HOW IT ENDS, WHICH IS NOT WITH AN ANSWER

☆☆☆ *"The events build to a clear conclusion just as in any other Shadowrun adventure, but **the player characters have no way of knowing whether any of their experiences actually occurred.**"*

Everyone wakes on the same morning, moments before sunrise, whenever they dropped out — so none of them can reach the others first.

- ⚠ **Anyone who "died" wakes abruptly with a Serious Stun wound** that heals normally, remembering everything up to the moment of their death, and nothing else to show for it.
- ⚠⚠ **Anyone who walked away** wakes thrashing, the shadows briefly wrong. ☆ Then, **for a number of days equal to 10 minus their Essence or Magic, whichever is higher, they dream of the finished Bridge and of Thayla's cruel death** — accumulating **1 box of Stun per night, which does not heal until the dreams stop.**
- ☆☆☆ **Anyone who stayed wakes gently, called out of a restful night by an ordinary bird singing outside the window. When they go to look for it, its song stops.** They dream too — **for days equal to their Essence or Magic** — ☆ **of Thayla in all her glory at the edge of the Chasm, singing back the darkness.**

⚠⚠ **There is no location in the American southwest that matches the place they visited.** If they run into Harlequin or Jane afterwards, **neither can tell them conclusively what**

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happened — *"on many levels, the quest remains as mystifying to them as to the player characters."*

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"How can the runners tell if they won? How can they know what actually happened? They can't ... at least not yet."***

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐⭐ **A name for the thing.** Four seasons of unexplained wrongness now has a category, a mechanism, and a deadline: **within the decade.**
- ⭐⭐ **The knowledge that the Great Ghost Dance did it** — the founding miracle of the Native American Nations is the reason the door is opening early.
- ⭐ **Between 49 and 61 Team Karma**, and ⭐⭐ **a permanent ten per cent bonus to all Team Karma for a year and a day** for everyone who stayed.
- ⚠⚠ **A one-word answer to the bug question** they have been carrying since Season Three, delivered dismissively by the only person who would know.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **A permanent split in the party, if the vote was not unanimous.** Who stayed and who left is now a fact about each character, written in the save.
- ⚠ **No proof of any of it.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **The Enemy, named, with a decade on the clock**	⚠⚠ **Seasons 5–8, as pressure rather than plot.** The campaign does not deliver them; ⭐ **the value is that the players now know and nobody else does**
⭐⭐⭐ **`char.<name>.stayed_with_thayla`**	⚠ **Forever.** Record it per character. It is the single best-earned line in the save file
⭐⭐ **Darke, and the children who spoke Aztlan Spanish**	**Season 5's Aztlan material**, and the Aztechnology spine already running from **1.5 → 2.1 → 3.2**
⭐⭐ **"They have built their bridge before"**	⚠ Never resolved in Shadowrun. **Leave it that way**
⭐ **Harlequin's Essence of 8, presented as information and never explained**	✎ Open. **The best unexplained number in the campaign**
⭐⭐ **The relationship between the Harlequin figure and the Thayla figure in three of four Places**	⚠⚠ He refuses all comment. ⭐ **That refusal is the plant**
⭐ **Jane Foster, now an apprentice and now competent**	**Season 5 onward**, as a contact the players watched grow up

> ⭐⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — THIS IS THE LARGEST SINGLE CROSSOVER SURFACE IN EITHER CAMPAIGN, AND IT IS ALL IN PRINT.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **The Enemy is the Scourge.** The thing the Sixth World is only now discovering is the same force that emptied Barsaive into the kaers, and Harlequin's account of the last invasion — hide behind powerful magic until the mana level falls — **is a description of the kaers given by a man who was there.** ⭐⭐ The Sixth World's best hope is a plan the Fourth World already executed once, at unimaginable cost, and **the players are being asked to hold a door that a whole civilisation once went underground to avoid.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **"The last Knight of the Crying Spire."** Said aloud, in print, in the opening fiction — ⚠ and the KB already held that order independently, in `earthdawn/lore/history.md`. **It was found, not invented.** Together with *"the Northern Islands are gone. Forgotten dust of a*

> *forgotten world,"* this is Harlequin's Fourth World identity stated as plainly as it will ever be. ⚠⚠ **Do not gloss it. Read it and move on.**
>
> ☆☆ **Thayla.** In this campaign she is a mortal troubadour of the Fourth World and **Mountainshadow's charge across both worlds —** ⚠ and she is **alive and losable in 1506**, which means an Earthdawn party can meet the woman before a Shadowrun party ever hears her sing. ☆☆☆ **She and Darke are the two poles of the whole metaplot: the voice that holds the coming at bay, and the man who wants it to arrive.** That is exactly why he pollutes her Place rather than simply killing her.
>
> ☆☆ **Darke is Nehrion Dask**, the connective villain — and ⚠⚠ **the children's Aztlan Spanish is the book's own quiet accusation** that his real-world body is an Aztlan blood mage. ⚠⚠⚠ **KILLING DARKE HERE DOES NOT KILL HIM.** A metaplanar manifestation is not the man, and the book says the Enemy will simply find others. ☆ **His printed vulnerability to the Architect's sword is real, and it is the long route to actually ending him — in either world.**

> ⚠⚠ **THE ONE-WAY RULE, AND IT MATTERS MORE HERE THAN ANYWHERE.** By this point the table has finished at most Earthdawn seasons 1–3. **Every word above is planting.** ☆ Nothing may be phrased as recognition, and **no NPC may connect the Enemy to anything the players have not personally seen.** The reveal is not that this is the Scourge **— the reveal is a name for a thing, and it is enough.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THIS IS THE COLLECTION POINT FOR THE WHOLE OF SEASONS ONE TO FOUR.**

Set up in	What lands here
4.5	☆☆☆ **Harlequin comes back to them.** ⚠ He owes them nothing, he is out of ideas, and he is asking rather than hiring — ☆ **and this time he is frightened**
4.5	☆☆ **The rapier.** As the second wave closes he says *"my sword, if you please"* — meaning the antique he threw them as their fee — and at their blank stare clutches his heart: *"You didn't bring my sword?"* ☆ Then winks: *"It's okay, I have another one."* ⚠ **A group that sold it badly will feel this**
4.3 → 4.5	☆☆☆ **Jane Foster is his apprentice now**, with foci on her wrists and an opinion of her own. ⚠ They abducted her three episodes ago
3.3	☆☆ **Ariel Nasir is at the masquerade ball.** ⚠ **Say nothing. Let one player recognise a face in a mask**
2.9 · 2.11 · 3.x	☆☆☆ **The bug question, answered dismissively and on the page.** Four seasons of hive horror gets *"not hardly — just a pesky nuisance"* — ⚠⚠ **and then something far worse is described**
2.2 · 2.5 · 3.4	☆☆☆ **Every anti-conflation warning in this document pays off right here.** The free spirit, the idol, the toxic shaman — ⚠ **a table that was allowed to file those under "the Enemy" gets nothing from this scene.** A table that was not, gets the best reveal in the campaign
1.1 onward	☆☆ **The Great Ghost Dance stops being**

	background history and becomes the reason their world is on a clock
1.4 → 4.5	⭐ **The Laughing Man again** — as an obese clown with three black balloons that nobody can catch. ⚠ **Fifth and last echo**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Seed *Foreshadows* two runs early and never explain any of it.** ⚠ Lower the target numbers by 1 and say nothing. **The unexplained mechanical generosity is the single most unsettling thing in the book.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run *Less Than Twenty Questions* for real.** Take each player aside. Write the answers down. ⚠ **Then use them at the dock**, in front of everyone.
- ⚠⚠ **Tell the players about the composition gates and the astral ban before session one**, not during. ⭐ A decker's player who knows in advance that this book is not built for them can bring the right attitude; one who finds out in play has a bad month.
- ⭐⭐ **Roleplay it, do not roll it.** The book asks for this repeatedly and it is right: *"these events hold far too much importance to the survival of their world for the player characters to get off that easy."*
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not soften the Songbird's failure.** Build the hope, let the bird sing, let it be the most beautiful thing in the campaign — **and then let the creatures go back to work.** ⭐ The despair is load-bearing; the finale does not work without it.
- ⭐⭐ **Harlequin must never be competent here.** He is drunk at the start, wrong in the middle, and hanging upside down in a bone frame at the end. ⚠ **The whole point is that the campaign's most powerful NPC has run out of answers and the runners have not.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Ask Thayla's question and then stop talking.** *"What happens when you leave?"* ⚠⚠ **Do not hint. Do not have Harlequin suggest it. Do not have Jane suggest it.** The book removes every NPC who could — deliberately — and if nobody at the table thinks of staying, **that is the campaign's answer about these characters, and you must let it stand.**
- ⭐ **Give them the full minute, in real time.** Say so, and mean it.
- ⚠⚠ **Write down who stayed.** Per character, in the save. ⭐ It changes how those people talk to each other for the next four seasons.
- ⭐⭐ **End on the waking, and give the two endings their different weather** — one of them wakes to a bird outside the window, and the other wakes cold. **Do not editorialise.** They will work it out.

SEASON FOUR — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

⭐⭐⭐ **The season that stopped being about the sprawl.** Four *Harlequin* chapters, a corporate heist in a hostile city, one deliberately empty week, and a finale that took them out of the world entirely and told them what is coming. ⚠ **They ended the season with something no other runner in Seattle has: a name, a mechanism, and a deadline.**

Thread	Where it stands at the end of Season Four	Where it goes
⭐⭐⭐ **The Enemy**	**Named. Explained. On a decade's clock.** ⚠ And	⭐ **Seasons 5–8 as pressure,**

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	unprovable	**never as plot.** Do not deliver them
⭐⭐⭐ **Who stayed with Thayla**	**A fact about each character, recorded per name**	⚠️ **Forever.** Never adjudicate it again; just let it be true
⭐⭐ **Harlequin**	Alive, beaten, unexplained. ⚠️ Owes them nothing and they owe him nothing	⭐ Recurring, rarely, and always at his convenience
⭐⭐ **Ehran the Scribe**	Alive, humiliated, and **even**. Two ears again within six months	⚠️ **The Tír spine** — and *"we are now merely even"* is not a man who has finished
⭐⭐ **Nehrion Dask / Darke / Oscuro**	⚠️⚠️ **Killed as a manifestation, alive as a man.** The children spoke Aztlan Spanish	⭐⭐ **Season 5's Aztlan material**, and the spine from **1.5 → 2.1 → 3.2**
⭐ **Jane Foster**	Harlequin's apprentice. Free of her father's spell lock, at the cost of her femur	⭐ A contact they watched grow up
⭐⭐ **The Tír**	**1.6 → 2.5 → 2.10 → 4.2 → 4.5.** Aithne Oakforest named; **Taelech disillusioned; a Paladin knows what is inside Althain**	⭐ Seasons 6–7
⭐⭐ **The dragons**	**1.3 → 2.1 → 2.5 → 3.7.** ⚠️ Plus a young Western dragon that may have got out of Ehran's workroom, and *"only the fraggin' dragons would have any hope of living through it"*	⭐⭐ **Season 8**
⭐ **The Universal Brotherhood**	Finished as a mystery in **2.11**, and formally demoted here to *"a pesky nuisance"*	⚠️ **Season 3's ghosts only.** Do not revive it
⭐ **The rapier, the Denver collector**	Unspent, unless they sold it badly	⭐ A side job whenever Denver comes up
⭐⭐ **The Great Ghost Dance**	⚠️ No longer history. **The reason the clock is running**	**Season 5**, where the politics of the Nations stop being scenery

SEASON FIVE · The Dragon Runs for President

2057. Veteran to Elite, 80–110 Karma.

⭐⭐⭐ **The season the world outside the shadows becomes the story — and it ends with the most famous death in Shadowrun.**

⚠⚠ **Fire this at the season opening, as news, before the first job.** In early 2057 a scandal of unheard-of proportions breaks: **the 2056 election — "the dullest election of the 21st century" — turns out to have been rigged**, the decades-old *remote vote* system compromised by electronic tampering *"by person or persons unknown,"* apparently with the approval of the highest office in the land. Congress impeaches **both the President and the Vice President**. Speaker of the House **Betty Jo Pritchard** becomes interim president and, by default, **the first woman ever to hold the office** — until untainted elections can be held.

⭐⭐ **And the compressed calendar is what makes the season work.** The snap campaign runs **just under eight months**, which denies every candidate the usual long public scrutiny — *"for the first time in almost a hundred years,* ***money alone will not win the election****."* Fringe parties get an unprecedented run at it. Policlubs pick sides.

⭐⭐⭐ **Then, on 15 March 2057, on a special episode of his own talk show *Wyrm Talk*, the great dragon Dunkelzahn declares that he is running for president.** He is legally able to: he was granted UCAS citizenship by act of Congress the year before — ⭐ mostly because *"the prospect of taxing the dragon's holdings was just too juicy… to say nothing of the value of capturing the Awakened vote in an election year"* — ⚠ and a constitutional provision written to grandfather Canadians into the electoral process turns out to cover new citizens generally.

⚠⚠ **The reaction polarises everything.** The Awakened factions split between the metahuman candidates and the strongly pro-Awakened dragon. Humanis is enraged at the thought of a *"mythological monster"* in the White House. ⭐ *"The political situation is a massive powder-keg of opposing groups, likely to explode at any minute."*

⭐ **Eight episodes**, drawn from two books and interleaved **by campaign stage rather than by book** — *Super Tuesday!* is the early campaign, *Shadows of the Underworld* the late one. ⚠⚠⚠ **And the season does not end on an episode. It ends on a date: 9 August 2057.**

> **✎ THE SIX ISSUES — a reusable frame, and worth having on an index card.**
>
> Every candidate this season has to answer the same six questions, and any NPC politician you invent should have a position on all of them: **reunification with California** (⭐ *"naturally, no one in the UCAS much cares what Californians think about the idea"*) · **Bug City**, and what to do about the deadlock in Chicago — ⚠ which anti-Awakened candidates point to as *"the inevitable consequences of uncontrolled magic use"* · **foreign policy**, and whether forty years of isolationism is ending · ⚠⚠ **war with the CAS**, which some hawks are openly calling for · ⭐⭐⭐ **racial justice and Awakened rights** — including groups demanding legal recognition for sasquatches, free spirits **and ghouls** · and **the economy**, which by 2057 means the megacorporations, *"virtually nations unto themselves."*
>
> ⭐ Hand a player the list and ask which one their character actually cares about. **That answer is worth more this season than any contact.**

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5.1 · Political Poison

SOURCE

📕 ***Super Tuesday!*** (FASA), adventure 1 of 5 — the first book of the election trilogy. ⚠️ Set in Seattle, and ⭐ **transplantable to any large UCAS city** if the campaign has moved.

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **1** · ⭐⭐ **preventing the release of the poison 2** · defeating Alan Riv **1**.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **THIS EPISODE GATES ON BIOTECH IN ITS FIRST THREE MINUTES, AND THE BOOK IS FINE WITH THE FRIEND DYING.** Read the opening scene below before you schedule it.

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐ **It opens with a phone call from a friend, and the friend is dying while she makes it.**

Silver cracked a Hawkshorne Chemical storage facility — drugged barghests, a passkey lifted off a junior exec *"he wouldn't miss it for awhile — at least not until someone happened by his condo and let him out of the closet"* — and came out with a slim silver canister. ⚠️ A rent-a-cop called **Skippy**, young enough that she thinks he *"should be asking someone out to the prom,"* put a round through her bag on the way out.

> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ ***"The valve on the slim silver canister was cracked, probably by Skippy's bullet. A small puddle of green fluid had pooled in the bottom of the bag, leaking slowly from the canister. The chemical tang hit Silver like a slap in the face."***

She has been exposed to something *"so nasty that the UCAS government had actually bothered to ban it"* and she has no idea what it is. She cannot call the Johnson — she does not know him, and *"he might well take the goods off her and leave her sick or dying in the street."* ⭐ So she calls the runners.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **AND THEN THE CLOCK.** *"If the runners do nothing,* ***Silver dies three minutes after they arrive.****"* Moving her kills her — *"she will probably die before they even get her out of the building."* **They have to save her themselves, in the room, now.**

Two ways to do it, and only two:

- ⚠️ **Biotech (4)** to diagnose the poisoning, then **Biotech (8)** to build an antidote with a medkit. ⭐ *"Keep in mind that the medkit expert system has the equivalent of Rating 3 in Biotech Skill, if none of the runners have that skill."*
- **Antidote Deadly Toxin** — a Spell Success Test against **Target Number 8**, then ⭐ a Body Test for Silver on **5 dice** against the same target number **minus the spell's successes**. ⚠️ **Two or more successes and she lives.**

> ✎ **CAST THE VICTIM YOURSELF — the book tells you to, and after four seasons you should.**

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> *"If desired,* ***use another NPC from the gamemaster's current campaign in Silver's place. Ideally, the NPC should be a friend of several of the player characters, and also a character the gamemaster won't mind sacrificing if the runners fail.***" Former player characters, other runners they know, or **a favourite fixer** are all named as options — and the NPC need not have done the theft, only have handled the canister.

> ☆☆ **By 2057 this campaign has four seasons of people in the save who qualify.** ⚠⚠ Pick one the table actually likes, and understand that **you are choosing someone who might die in the first ten minutes of the session.** That is the price of the scene working, and it is worth paying.

☆☆☆ THE VILLAIN'S ORIGIN, AND THE HERO CAUSED IT

Arthur Vogel is a presidential candidate and a celebrated environmental lawyer with an uncanny gift for predicting trouble from eco-terrorist groups — especially when his legal opponents refuse to settle out of court.

⚠⚠⚠ ***"Vogel's 'predictions' have nothing to do with prescience or even luck. For years he has operated what amounts to a protection racket, using the threat of eco-terrorism to extract lucrative settlements from his opponents."***

Years ago he sent a **TerraFirst!** cell into a Hawkshorne Chemical plant in Seattle to shut down production of a particular toxin. ⚠ Hawkshorne found out and ambushed them. The plant was destroyed and **everyone died — the whole cell, and many of the security men.** Hawkshorne settled out of court and agreed to pull the chemical from the market; ⚠⚠ **they stockpiled it instead.** ☆ *"Vogel considered the case a victory despite the fate of the TerraFirst! cell."*

⚠⚠⚠ **One saboteur lived. Alan Riv**, *"a young and idealistic shaman,"* crawled out horribly burned by the chemicals, too frightened of the authorities to seek help, and went down into the sewers — where, *"sick and in terrible pain,"* he twisted onto a toxic path. He gathered followers among the other outcasts underground. ☆ *"Through his years of slow and agonizing recovery,* ***one thing sustained him: his plans for revenge****."*

☆☆☆ **And the symmetry of his plan is exact.** He has stolen a sample of the stockpiled chemical, and he intends to release it at a Vogel campaign rally — killing thousands, probably including Vogel, and **guaranteeing that the investigation exposes the racket.** ⚠ *"He finds it fitting that Arthur Vogel should be ruined — possibly killed —* ***by the very same chemical that Riv's TerraFirst! team attempted to stop Hawkshorne from producing, and that Vogel fought to have legally banned and destroyed.***"

☆☆ **What the chemical actually is, which is the joke underneath the whole adventure: a potent insecticide, banned because of its toxic effect on metahumans.** ⚠ In a setting whose insect spirits have exactly one universal weakness, the most dangerous object in Seattle this week is a canister of bug spray.

THE CHASE

Everyone wants the canister and nobody explains why. ☆ Inside Silver's bag are a datareader and three optical chips — two are metroplex guidebooks *"carefully annotated with references to different back alleys,"* and the third holds **the run specs and the meet location**, a drainage ditch on the edge of the Redmond Barrens.

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⚠ **A rival team hits the safe house** — a smoke canister through the window, then **Webb** and **Red Lana** through the door, and then an **old ork woman in a cape of black feathers** hopping down off the windowsill with a twisted cane. *"**Find it,**" she snaps, and raises her wrinkled hands.*
☆☆ **Callieach** spends a turn summoning a Force 6 hearth spirit that fights by throwing furniture and broken glass, then concentrates on shielding her team and handling any player magician.

⚠⚠ **The book is explicit that this should not be a bloodbath** — *"just a device to keep the story moving briskly and introduce the runners to some of the opposition."* Hand over the canister and they take it and go. ☆ *"However, it is far more likely that the player characters will fight back first and ask questions later."* ⚠⚠⚠ **And if Silver is alive she is helpless in the middle of the room, Callieach has no qualms about taking a hostage, and that leaves the runners almost no cover.**

☆☆ **Meanwhile Riv is looking for it by ritual.** Any magician who assenses the canister in the next couple of hours notices **it is the target of a sending.** ⚠ Countering the ritual only delays it.
⚠⚠⚠ **And tracing the sending back is a trap:** the runner gets as far as the shut-down Hawkshorne plant in Redmond before being attacked in astral space by **six Force 5 toxic earth spirits, with a seventh arriving four rounds in.**

☆ **Then the Reservoir Dogs** — *"a gang of completely crazed go-gangers,"* every one of them **scarred or deformed in some way, even the elves** — come for the canister, or, if the runners no longer have it, simply to tidy up the loose end. ⚠ Kamikaze lets them **ignore the first four boxes of damage they take.**

☆☆☆ **A captured ganger is how the players learn what they are dealing with, on an interrogation ladder.** ⚠ **Interrogation (5)** — high because of the kamikaze *"and the ganger's fear of Riv's retribution,"* and lowerable if they make cooperation worth his while:

Successes	What he gives up
1	*"We were told to get the canister away from you. **Never mind by who.**"*
2	*"We work for Riv. Shaman of the Great Earth Mother. **He ain't no pretty daisy-eater**... everybody underground is afraid of him, **but he's good to people who do what he wants.**"*
☆☆ 3	*"He keeps talking about some guy named Vogel — **calls him the Poisoner of the Great Mother.**"*
⚠⚠ 4	*"**Riv's more than crazy, he's fraggin' toxic.** He lives with a bunch of fragged-up spirits in the burned-out shell of an old chemical plant in the Barrens."*

THE LAIR

☆ **The condemned Hawkshorne plant in the Puyallup Barrens, near Hell's Kitchen** — slated for demolition years ago and never demolished *"because the land on which it stands is commercially worthless."* ⚠⚠ It is a **toxic domain** under Riv's control, with **at least one toxic earth spirit always on astral guard.**

☆☆ **And his medicine lodge is a converted conference room**, which is the detail that makes it land: charred bones and skulls, symbols smeared in *"hideous fluorescent paint"* across walls, floor and ceiling — ⚠⚠⚠ **and one of Arthur Vogel's campaign posters tacked to the wall with**

symbols painted over it. On the table, flyers for the rally and **a crumpled map of the Superdome.** ⭐ *"If the runners move any of the garbage, a few fat roaches scuttle away."*

⚠ **Three hell hounds** guard it, held by Control Animal spells in spell locks **sewn into their spiked collars.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Take the collar off and the animal becomes confused and runs away** — an Unarmed Combat attack followed by a Strength or Quickness (6) Test at two successes. **A mercy option that most tables will never look for, hidden in plain sight.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE SUPERDOME

Thousands of people packing in *"like sheep milling in a pen."* News crews. Brackhaven supporters shouting at metahumans. Lone Star in riot gear with ultra-heavy weapons, expecting trouble — ⚠⚠ *"little do they know just how bad the trouble might get."*

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"**Somewhere in this crowd of thousands is a toxic shaman armed with deadly poison that can wipe out all these people, and you're the only ones who know he's here.**"*

⭐ **Getting in is easy for the worst possible reason.** The crowd is too big for the Star to do more than a visual check — **a Perception Test on 4 dice against the Concealability of each runner's illegal gear.** ⚠ **The crush that makes the atrocity possible is also what gets their guns inside.**

⭐⭐ **Riv is in the rafters**, moving on a gecko crawl spell. ⚠ *"Any runner who thinks to **look up** while searching for Riv should make a Perception Test against Riv's Stealth Attribute of 6."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And then the adventure becomes a fight on narrow beams, half a metre wide, at lethal height.** Walking one costs **an Athletics (4) Test — or Quickness (6) without the skill — every combat round.** Fail and you must test again not to fall: **1 success catches the beam and hangs; 2–3 lands flat on it; 4 or more recovers balance.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ *"A fall from the dizzying height of the Superdome ceiling is almost instantly fatal... **somewhere in the neighborhood of 30D damage** (and will probably injure or kill a few bystanders below as well)... **roll 1D6; the result is the number of people injured or killed. The runners had better be careful, neh?**"*

⭐ Riv has no such problem, and can cross beams, catwalks **and the walls and roof of the dome** at full speed. **A player mage with gecko crawl, catfall, levitate or an air elemental has a shot at keeping up.**

⚠⚠ **The canister is already attached to a beam on a time-release mechanism set to spray in two minutes — twelve combat turns.** Riv fights to the death, with **two Force 5 toxic spirits, one earth and one water**, whose tactic is to use **corrosive secretions to burn through the beam the runners are standing on.** ⭐ *"As long as Riv and his spirits remain able to fight, the runners have almost no chance of reaching the canister."*

⭐⭐ **The cavalry arrives six turns after the first gunshot** and will try to subdue Riv *and* the runners — ⚠ **unless the runners convince them.** *"The Lone Star officer may just accept at face value a statement like, '**Look, he's shooting at us too**,' or, '**I can defuse the bomb**.'"* Disarming it is **Electronics (6), one test per turn, six total successes.**

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WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐ **A favour from a man who may become President of the UCAS.** Vogel cannot get them out of custody himself, but he calls them *"heroes for the environment"* and *"political prisoners"* loudly enough that ⭐ **political PR frees them within a few days.** He is then **good for one future favour.**
- ⚠ **Fifteen minutes of fame**, and then nothing. *"They will be media darlings for about 15 minutes before some other newsworthy event comes along."*
- ⚠⚠ **A permanent Lone Star and UCAS government interest in them** — *"it's an election year, after all, and the race includes a dragon candidate. **Anything could happen.**"*
- ⭐ **TerraFirst!, and nearly every other eco-terrorist organisation in the plex, wanting to talk.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Or, if they failed: thousands of dead, and the blame.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐ **Vogel's favour**	⚠ **Any time the season needs a door opened** — and ⭐ far more if the players later learn what he actually is
⭐⭐⭐ **What Vogel actually is**	⚠⚠ **Unspent, unless they dig.** The Legwork ladder gives it up at three successes: *"Artie made careful use of shadow resources... **they handed him the ammo and he knew just where to aim it.**"*
⭐ **Callieach's team**	A rival crew the players did not beat, who do *"wetwork, kidnapping, 'personnel adjustment,' the whole lot"* — ⭐⭐ **reusable all season**
⚠ **Hawkshorne Chemical**	*"Won't be too long before someone comes along and swallows them up in one bite."* ⭐ **A corporate acquisition waiting for a season that needs one**
⭐⭐ **The insecticide**	⚠ **Season 5.6 goes into Bug City.** Say nothing whatsoever
⭐ **Whoever they lost, or nearly lost, in the first ten minutes**	⚠ **The rest of the campaign**

CROSSOVER — none, and 5.1 should not carry one.

⚠⚠ **The dragon is on the ballot this season and that is enough.** The register's material for Season Five sits in **5.2 and the closing beat**, where Dunkelzahn is actually on the page — ⭐ and the value of the correspondence depends on the players meeting the *man* before they are given anything to notice.

⭐⭐ **This episode's job is to make the election feel like weather** — something happening to Seattle whether the runners engage with it or not. ⚠ A toxic shaman's revenge on a candidate is exactly that, and dressing it with a Fourth World detail would make the season's politics feel like a puzzle rather than a place.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐ **Very little, deliberately — and that is the right way to open a season.** Season Four ended inside the metaplanes with a named apocalypse on a decade's clock. **This episode is a friend bleeding out on a couch in Redmond**, and the contrast is the point.

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⚠⚠ **The one genuine callback is thematic and you should let it sting.** In **3.4** the players met a toxic shaman and the outline warned you not to let anyone file him under "the Enemy." ⭐⭐ **Here is another one, three seasons later, with a completely mundane and completely sufficient reason for existing: a man who was set on fire by a lawyer's business model.** After 4.6, a table that has just been told the world is ending will reach for the cosmic explanation. **This is the episode that teaches them not to.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Open with the phone call, in the middle of whatever else they were doing.** ⭐ *"In the words of many a Shadowrun, 'this one's personal.' **Make the scene hit the runners hard and fast. Make them think quickly on their feet and don't let up the pressure.**"*
- ⚠⚠ **Run the three minutes honestly.** Do not stretch them, do not let a move to a street doc work, and ⭐ **do not invent a save.** The book gives exactly two outs and both are on the table if anyone has the skill or the spell. **If nobody does, she dies, and the adventure carries on without her.**
- ⭐⭐ **Cast the victim from the save file, not from the book.** See the box above. ⚠ And decide *before* the session whether you can actually afford to lose that person.
- ⭐ **Play the rival team as professionals.** They want the canister, not a firefight; a table that surrenders it is playing well, not badly, and **you get Callieach back later either way.**
- ⚠⚠ **Let someone trace the sending, and let it hurt.** Six toxic earth spirits in astral space is a punishment for good procedure — ⭐ **which is exactly why it teaches the lesson that Riv is out of their weight class right up until he isn't.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Do not point at the hell hounds' collars.** A table that thinks to strip the spell lock off a magically enslaved animal instead of killing it has earned the moment entirely by themselves.
- ⚠⚠ **The Superdome should feel like a crowd, not a dungeon.** Thousands of people, news drones, riot cops, and **a two-minute timer forty metres up.** ⭐ Every round someone spends on a beam is a round the clock runs.
- ⭐⭐ **And if they fail, run the aftermath rather than the reload.** The book's recommendation is unambiguous — release the poison, kill the crowd, and let them deal with it. ⚠⚠⚠ **Then have Vogel hold a press conference blaming the corporations for the massacre his own racket caused, and turn it into a campaign platform.** *"The Superdome massacre will become a political rallying point for Vogel's campaign."*

5.2 · Excelsior

SOURCE

📕 ***Shadows of the Underworld*** (FASA), adventure 1 of 5. ⭐⭐ **The sister volume to *Super Tuesday!*, and the only book in the knowledge base set in the window where Dunkelzahn is alive and campaigning.** Everything else from this era works from the consequences of his will.

⭐ **New York City.** ⚠ Portable to *"any major UCAS city that contains a skyscraper and a large convention hall,"* but the Empire State Building is doing real work here — see below.

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⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **2** · disarming the bomb **1** · ⭐⭐ **fewer than two innocents die 1** · terrorists don't escape **1**. ⚠️ **Ignore the threat award entirely if the runners leave the building at the first opportunity.**

⭐⭐⭐ **And the best Karma instruction in the knowledge base, which you should read before running it:** *"**Reward player characters for playing up the drama.** If any runners get into long taunting conversations with Alicia over micro-transceivers, **drop a penny out the window to nail one of the heavies sixty floors below**, or ask to be beaten up in place of the 'innocent' folks, **they should get Karma.** ⭐⭐ **Make this your group's adventure, not the stock action movie everyone thinks of when they hear 'terrorist' and 'skyscraper' in the same sentence.**"*

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐⭐ **The job is rally security. The adventure is a hostage siege carried out by the client's own supporters.**

Martha Delaney, who runs Dunkelzahn's New York security staff, wants professionals for crowd control at a Madison Square Garden rally in a few days — the campaign has heard rumours of trouble from Humanis-adjacent groups. **25,000 UCAS dollars apiece**, ⭐ negotiable up by ten per cent per success, and she also wants their read on **who in the metroplex might want to wreck the rally**, which is a polite way of asking them to spend their contact network on her behalf.

⭐⭐ **The meet is at Windows on the World, at the top of the Empire State Building** — and the setting archaeology is one of the nicest details in the book. *"When the World Trade Center went down in the big earthquake of 2005, the proprietors of the Windows on the World restaurant that had graced the destroyed skyscraper **pulled a few strings and licensed the name** to the restaurant just below the Empire State's observation deck. **Photos and plaques around the restaurant tell the story.**"* The building itself is *"old, pitted, rusty, and patched with ferrocrete,"* ⭐ and still carries enough prestige that Shiawase, Aztechnology and Ares all keep subsidiaries in it.

⚠️⚠️ **The front door is a gear problem and you should let it bite.** A Knight Errant Gateway detector *"festooned with snazzy, hi-tech doohickeys like some kind of cyberpunk Christmas tree — **it looks like a plastic fork might set it off**,"* six guards on two Rating 8 magnetic anomaly detectors, and a Rating 3 chem-sniffer over every bag. There is a flat no-weapons policy; ⚠️ **anyone whose Class C cyberware trips the MADs gets taser restraints**, and ⚠️⚠️ **anyone with detected cyberware is asked for a SIN.** ⭐ The book's aside is worth taking: *"faked identification is a wonderful way to make player characters **poorer but wiser**."*

⭐ **Percy**, Delaney's secretary, meets them with a placard and pre-paid lockers, ⭐⭐ and then **hands the credstick over to one of the runners as a gesture of good faith.** ⚠️⚠️ The book's own note on Percy is blunt: *"if you need to kill someone at the beginning of* All Chipped Up *to show that the Adventists mean business, **Percy has 'cannon fodder' written all over him.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ THE CULT, AND WHY IT IS BETTER THAN IT SOUNDS

The Church of the Whole Earth was founded by **Jaelle Lester**, who in 2012, in a crisis of faith, went into the wilderness looking for a sign from the Goddess — ⭐⭐ **and personally witnessed Dunkelzahn's first appearance in the Awakened world.** Her account is the cult's scripture, and it is written with real sympathy:

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> *"I walked until I could breathe again, until I could taste air that She had kept clean.* ⚠ ***I did not find it.*** *And I cried out,* ***weeping for all the children born into the world, their innocence helpless to purify it, their strength not enough to carry their fathers' sins****... And I asked Her for a sign...* ***I raised my eyes upward and saw, above the trees, a blue that stood out like purity against the smoke-stained sky. The beating of his silver and azure wings created the freshening air I breathed.*** ☆☆☆ *And I knew that this was Her sign, Her word.* ***The dragon, the one we now know as Dunkelzahn, is our only salvation.****"*

⚠⚠ **The Whole Earth Adventists are the fanatical fringe of that church**, and Dunkelzahn's presidential run has convinced them their time has come: he is **destined** for the office, and *"anyone who disagrees with this notion does not deserve the privilege of living in the dragon's utopia."*

☆☆ **And the line the whole adventure turns on:** *"Dunkelzahn* ***does not approve*** *of the Adventists' attitude but* ***believes they are all talk and no action.*** ⚠⚠ ***Unfortunately, this is one of those rare occasions when the great dragon is wrong.****"*

THE TAKEOVER

☆ *"You hear a gentle knock on the door and the waiter steps in with a tray full of dessert — vanilla mousse topped with whipped cream and chocolate sprinkles,* ***followed by your side order of autofire, blood, and nasty gurgling noises.****"*

Alicia is in an armoured evening gown; the ork beside her is in a Boot Brothers suit, *"very macho, goes well with the G12 and the muscles."* ☆☆ *"Were they in the restaurant?* ***How come the bad guys always get to keep their guns?!****"*

⚠⚠ **The takeover has 41 hostages plus the runners, and the naming of names is the good part.** Alicia walks the room picking out *"****Mister Hsoi of the Yamaguchi-gumi****...* ***Mister Nodalto of Saeder-Krupp****...* ***Ms. Reilly of Shiawase Atomics****,"* declares that *"changes will be made,* ***starting now*** *— and they will continue when* ***the great wyrm leads us, his chosen people, to the future!****"* — and then **reads Jaelle Lester's *Revelation* aloud**, which is where you read the Sacred Vision to your players.

☆☆☆ **And the players' first real thought should be the one the book wants:** *"When Alicia begins her speech, the player characters should realize that she is a religious fanatic who believes that her violent actions will help Dunkelzahn. This should give them pause.* ⚠⚠ ***Are these the sort of people who will come to power if the Big D is elected?****"*

☆☆ **Meanwhile Delaney is working.** Perceptive runners notice that *"instead of sitting like the other hostages, Ms. Johnson is* ***almost underneath a table, behind the largest runner.*** *She is mumbling to herself, clearly talking on a* ***cyberphone****."* Her whispered pitch is the season's politics in five sentences:

> *"I called my boss.* ⚠⚠ ***If this gets out, Brackhaven and all the Humanis goons will splatter it through the press. You know what that means. People will blame him.*** *He's got some of his most trusted 'Trix watchdogs in the Grid.* ***They can probably prevent word getting out for the next hour or two, but we've got to stop this before then.****"* ☆ *She grins at the team. "****You want a new job?****"*

⚠⚠⚠ **The new job, in one sentence: get out of a guarded room, get down a hundred floors with no elevators, find several bombs and the trigger, defuse them and take the**

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terrorists before the blimp arrives — *"all without endangering a single innocent life. Dunkelzahn does not want any blood on his talons, and he is unforgiving if crossed."*
☆ Up to **100,000 UCAS dollars each**, and ⚠ *"most characters will realize that this is not a great time to bargain"* — though she will go fifteen per cent higher if they push.

☆☆☆ THE ESCAPE, WHICH IS THE SCENE THE ADVENTURE IS ACTUALLY ABOUT

⚠⚠ *"If the runners are accustomed to solving things with guns and magic, **the adventure could end with this encounter.** Weaponless, well-guarded and watched for signs of magic use, **the runners need to 'think sideways'**...* ☆☆ ***Encourage creativity; accept cinematic solutions even if they seem a little implausible.**"*

☆☆ **And the book asks for something rare — that you slow down.** *"Feel free to **stretch out the roleplaying**... Introduce some prepared non-player characters. **Have people spill their life stories. Make people bond.**"*

The distraction playbook: a classic medical-emergency scam draws Alicia and Fingers, ☆ who *"are much more likely to act sympathetic toward a metahuman and won't even bother to look at anyone obviously corporate- or yakuza-affiliated."* Starting fights among the other prisoners pulls guards. Distracting Fingers specifically lets a magician slip away invisible. ☆☆ *"The most effective strategy may be to try **several distractions in combination.**"*

☆☆☆ **NEGOTIATING WITH TERRORISTS, AND IT IS A GENUINELY WELL-BUILT SOCIAL MECHANIC.** A public speech fails — Alicia cuts them off and the group closes ranks. **Talk to one alone and it is an opposed Negotiation (Willpower) Test** — ☆☆ ***"make them put their argument into words."***

Who	What works
⚠ **Alicia**	Nothing. *"Talking to Alicia will get the runners hurt. **She wants her moment of homicidal glory, and she's going to get it no matter what.**"*
☆ **Noah**	Unlikely but possible; he *"views this mission as doing the world a favor"*
☆☆☆ **Fingers**	**The crack in the wall.** A **Perception (6)** reveals **he envies Alicia her status** — ☆ and runners who suggest *she plans to pin the blame on him if it goes wrong* **may turn him into a saboteur**

⚠⚠ **And the argument that actually lands is political, not moral.** *"If all the runners can say is that innocent people will get hurt, the terrorists are **unlikely to listen**.* ☆☆☆ *If the runners point out that **terrorist tactics might make people dislike Dunkelzahn** ... well, maybe the Adventists will listen after the Kamikaze wears off."*

☆☆ **Which is the other clock, and it runs in the runners' favour.** Most of the Adventists are on Kamikaze and have **one dose left between them.** ⚠ *"If the characters delay anywhere from ten minutes to an hour before talking to them, **the drug's effects may wear off.** Between doses, they get **irritable** — under the influence, they're **twitchy as all hell.**"*

DOWN A HUNDRED FLOORS

The elevators were sent to the ground and switched off by hand — ☆ *"the switch is **physically** off, so no one can grab control via the Matrix."* The stairwell needs an **Electronics (4)**, or **8** without a microtronics kit.

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⚠ **And then it is just stairs.** *"Walking down all the stairs takes about **an hour**, jogging takes **half an hour**, and whipping by takes **fifteen minutes**."* ☆☆ *"A conjured spirit with movement power will come in incredibly handy."* Anyone without two cyberlegs makes **three Athletics (5) Tests to resist Light Stun — ⚠⚠ and going back up costs three 5S Stun wounds.**

☆ **The descent is where you put the texture**, and the book's suggestions span the tonal range on purpose: terrorists at random intervals; **a janitor who hid in the stairwell and now begs to be saved and refuses to be left alone**; people trapped in a stopped elevator; ⚠⚠ and, *"for a darker twist,"* a terrorist who has dragged a night secretary into an empty office. ☆ The offices themselves are empty at this hour and *"may [hold] evidence of illegal activities or even some unidentified chips or inventions that could serve as a jumping-off point for another adventure."*

☆☆ **The lobby door has a handwritten sign on it: *"CLOSED FOR EXTERMINATION."*** Behind the ceramatal security desk, two Adventists with an LMG on a tripod pointed at the exit — one of them a bruiser called **Chunk-Style**, who has **written the whole plan out in crayon** to keep it straight:

> ☆ *"Lobby, Lock Doors (Very Important), Security Central (4th floor), Guards, Check, Roof, Bombs, Check, Restaurant, Check, Com Call, Final Check, Wait, Deck."*

⚠⚠ **A quietly brutal rule on those two:** *"Because of their **Kamikaze addiction**, these Adventists have only **eight** boxes of damage on their Condition Monitors."* ☆ **The drug that makes them dangerous is also what makes them killable.**

☆☆☆ SECURITY CENTRAL — THE FORK

Arthur Quazach is the Adventists' voice, waiting in the security centre so he can start talking the second his decker reaches the trid networks — ☆☆ because *"as the Adventists see it, **this whole venture is worthless without media coverage.**"*

⚠ **Play him well.** *"Play Arthur with **charisma and conviction. He is an evangelist of truth (his truth, at least), and believes so strongly in the rightness of his cause that some runners may be tempted to join him.**"* His pitch opens with a lie — that they never meant to hurt anyone and he was just about to release the innocents — and then tries to make the runners feel included:

> ***"When Dunkelzahn becomes president, we're going to see an incredible change in this world. The corporations will be run by real people, interested in something other than profits. The SINless will finally have a voice again. Metahumans will be given the equality they deserve."***

☆☆ **And the reason it might work:** *"Arthur is betting on the fact that **most SINless types like shadowrunners (and most metahumans) tend to be on Dunkelzahn's side**, and so may be less inclined to regard his words with skepticism."*

☆☆☆ **Then he makes the offer, and this is the fork the whole adventure is built around.** If they don't shoot him, **he tells them they are free to go** — and asks whether they would mind making a few calls to the local networks on their way out. ☆ If they hesitate, **a thousand nuyen each "for their trouble."**

> ⚠⚠ **Stick with the dragon: greater risk, greater payoff.** ⚠⚠ **Take Arthur's offer: a small profit, out with their skins, and a cause some of them may actually have**

> **sympathy for.** ⭐ *"He knows he cannot ensure that they will make the calls, but he is willing to take that risk."* And the runners are taking one of their own: ⚠⚠⚠ **double-crossing a dragon is never a good idea.**

⚠ **Either way a clock starts.** Leave him alive and he warns the others and begins the countdown. **Kill him and the others fire the bomb the next time they check in and get no answer — D6 + 15 minutes.**

⭐ Searching the room turns up a shorthand plan of operations and ⭐⭐ **the decker's Demolitions skillsoft**, *"which any runner with skillwires can use. **(This find will come in handy later.)**"*

THE BOMB

⭐ *"Finding a bomb in that mess could take hours — **but you've only got minutes.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **And the maintenance room contains one of the more startling NPC introductions in the knowledge base. Eden Harper**, a freelance demolitions expert, *"her skin mottled gray with livid red lumps, some of which are oozing… **her scalp has the same wasp-nest look as the rest of her skin.** One of her arms is dull metal; the other looks shrivelled and skeletal,"* speaking *"in a voice that sounds like **rusted metal cyberware being ripped from a flesh socket**."*

⚠⚠⚠ **THE FIRST INSTRUCTION IS LITERAL: *"Get out a stopwatch or an egg timer and start it."*** *"Talk quickly and in short sentences. **Make the players understand that time is their enemy and the enemy isn't stopping.**"*

⭐⭐ **And Eden's action economy is a beautiful trap.** *"**Any** action by the runners — attacking Harper, **yelling** at her, and so on — starts a combat round… If Harper survives more than one combat round, she will take **three** Simple Actions to activate the detonator.* ⚠⚠ *If the runners do **not** initiate a combat round while she fiddles with the bomb, **she needs only two.**"* ⭐ **Starting the fight slows her down. Leaving her alone speeds her up. Both doors are bad.**

⚠⚠ **The device: up to thirty smaller charges around the top floor plus the main bomb, all C-13 military grade, wired in series to a timer** — *"no sense having a radio detonator if you plan to be several klicks away when it goes off."* **The timer is set for fifteen minutes.** ⭐ *"The runners should start asking themselves just how long it took them to run down all those stairs — **and how much longer it will take with a crowd of people.**"*

⭐ **The evacuation maths, which you should do out loud:** forty-one people fit in the elevators if all six are running; **three minutes each way**, and **about ninety seconds to clear the restaurant** — ⚠ before you account for the fact that *"some of the hostages are fast, some slow; they get in each others' way, **have heart attacks**, trip and so on."*

⚠⚠ Anyone near the building when it blows takes **12D and is pinned under rubble, and armour does not help.** ⭐ Anyone still on the top floor is simply dead: *"when you're 100-plus floors up at ground zero of a huge explosion, **do you really need to bother making that dice roll?**"*

⭐⭐ **Three graded outs, in order of grace:** the skillsoft from Security Central · defaulting to the skill web · ⭐ **or talking Eden into disarming it herself**, a Negotiation Test at **Target Number 11** — ⭐⭐ **dropping to 9 for a bribe, or for the promise that Dunkelzahn might help her.**

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BULLETS OVER BROADWAY

The escape vehicle is Dunkelzahn's own campaign advertising blimp. *"The **giant silver-and-blue head of Dunkelzahn** is just the picture on the side of the monstrous advertising blimp, rolling around in hi-res ruthenium-polymer display."* **The cult flees the building it has just wired to explode, under a hundred-metre portrait of its god.**

Why a blimp is sound reasoning: advert blimps fly low enough to be invisible to most anti-aircraft sensors, **can change their advertising in a second** and vanish into the other blimps over downtown — and ***"no cop in his right mind will shoot a blimp over the city."***

The rooftop set-piece is fully specified and it is excellent. Each terrorist takes a Simple Action to hook onto the mooring cable, another to climb the stone lip, then a Free Action and a **Willpower (4)** to throw themselves off the building. **Grabbing one and going over with them is a Strength (8) Test**; fail and you slide down the ledge, saved only by **Quickness (5) and Strength (4)** — *"if not, the runner had better be able to fly."* **One hand per success; three or more successes means legs locked and hands semi-free. Runners on a cable cannot be hit by the minigun.** Shooting a cable is **TN 12** — **or TN 4 if you first spend a Simple Action grabbing it and holding your gun against it.** Shooting someone dangling from one is **TN 16.**

And the rigger is a decent man in a bad job. *"Plastic Boy does not want to see his friends hurt, **which can work to the runners' advantage.** He is especially careful to avoid people dressed in **suits or gowns** unless he is certain by their actions that they are the opposition — **the terrorists are still all dressed up**, and Plastic Boy does not want to plug any of them by accident."*

The book is explicit that this is a thrill, not a slaughter: *"This encounter is designed to provide some dramatic, fun combat — **not to leave the runners as multi-colored splotches on the streets of New York.**"* If it turns, bring in Lone Star copters, watcher spirits, a DocWagon flight — **or have Plastic Boy accidentally shoot his own people**, which may simply make the rest run.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Up to 100,000 UCAS dollars each**, plus **the Madison Square Garden job, now practically guaranteed.**
- **A room full of NPCs.** *"The rich, the powerful, the hot-drek runners, the mobs, the policlubs… Strangers may start talking to one another, **confess secrets because they expect to die** and so on."* Survivors may love them for it **or hate them for playing hero and getting somebody's someone killed.**
- **Surviving Adventists as personal enemies** — *"not particularly expert terrorists,"* but perfectly capable of **finding out where the runners live and leaving something under the hoods of their vehicles.** *"Revenge is one of their favorite pastimes, particularly in Alicia's case."*
- **A blimp, if they take it** — which makes four separate organisations assume they were in on it, until Delaney vouches for them. The rental company pays **up to 10,000 UCAS dollars and free rides** — *"Did you ever have an aerial view of an Urban Brawl game?"*
- **Or, if they ducked out early: no cash, no rewards, and *"no peace for the rest of their days."*** *"Dragons are notorious for their patience."*

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PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The hostage room**	⚠ **Anywhere.** The book's own note: *"Excelsior can serve as **a prequel to many adventures**."* ☆☆ Name three of the forty-one before the session and let the players save them
☆☆ **Whether they took Arthur's thousand**	⚠⚠ **The rest of the season.** A team that made the calls has a dragon's file open on them
☆☆ **Kyle Haeffner**, the VP candidate	☆ He starts appearing in Dunkelzahn's place from here — **5.8 and the closing beat**
☆ **Surviving Adventists**	A car bomb, whenever the season needs one to be personal
☆ **Eden Harper**, if she lived and was talked round	⚠ A demolitions contact with a grudge against everyone, ☆☆ **and a promise from a dragon that may never be honoured**
⚠ **The Madison Square Garden rally**	☆ Unwritten, and yours. **The players are now the security for a dragon's campaign event**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE SEASON'S FIRST, AND IT IS ABOUT A MAN WHO IS NEVER IN THE ROOM.**

⚠⚠ **Dunkelzahn does not appear in this adventure.** He is a voice in Martha Delaney's cyberphone, a team of deckers who are simply better than the opposition, and an authorisation to spend a hundred thousand a head. ☆☆☆ **That is the agent tell, and it is the whole point.** A courteous intermediary, unusually precise instructions, far too much money, and **no explanation of who is actually asking** — the identical beat this project plants for Darktooth in 1506.

☆☆ **Reuse the mannerisms exactly.** The formality. The insistence that no innocent is hurt, framed as *"no blood on his talons"* rather than as compassion. **The absolute refusal to be seen.** ⚠ If the table ever meets the dragon in the Fourth World, they should meet the same manners.

☆ **And there is a reason he behaves this way that is never stated and never should be.** In this campaign's terms his quiet game is **keeping the Hunter's prophet away from what the dragons hid — and protecting the singer who holds the door.** ⚠⚠⚠ The players stood on that outcropping two episodes ago. **They will never be told the two things are connected.**

⚠⚠ **One-way rule:** by now the table has finished at most Earthdawn seasons 1–4. **Nothing here may be phrased as recognition.** ☆ Play the manners and say nothing.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **4.6, obliquely and entirely for the gamemaster.** The runners spent the end of last season being asked to guard something on behalf of powers who would not explain themselves, and here they are again — ⚠ **except that this time the power is on the ballot and has a press office.**

☆ **And 5.1's lesson, immediately reversed.** Last episode's fanatic had a private grievance. **This episode's fanatics are sincere, articulate, ideologically coherent, and on the side the runners probably favour.** ⚠⚠ Arthur Quazach's speech is written to be persuasive because the adventure needs the players to feel the pull of it.

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RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠ **Enforce the door.** The weapons scan, the MADs, the SIN check. ☆ A team that walks in armed has skipped the scene that makes the escape hard, **and the escape is the adventure.**
- ☆☆☆ **Read *Revelation* aloud when Alicia does.** It is the single best piece of prose in the book and it makes the cult sympathetic in ninety seconds, which is exactly what the rest of the session needs.
- ⚠ **Do not let them talk to each other during the takeover.** *"Yell short commands; repeat 'we are in charge' a lot."* ☆ Point out the underbarrel grenade launcher **and that the woman holding it looks unhinged enough to fire it in a small room.**
- ☆☆ **Slow the middle down on purpose.** Forty-one frightened strangers in one room for an hour is a gift. ⚠ **Make people bond.** Then decide which of them lives.
- ☆☆☆ **Let the Kamikaze run out.** A table that stalls, talks, and works Fingers's envy instead of fighting has found the intended solution — ☆ and it should visibly work.
- ⚠⚠ **Run the stopwatch for real in the maintenance room.** The book says so and it is right. **Fifteen minutes, out loud, while they argue about the elevators.**
- ☆☆ **Do the evacuation arithmetic in front of them.** Six elevators, three minutes each way, forty-one people, ninety seconds to clear the restaurant. ⚠ **Let them realise they cannot get everyone out and have to choose.**
- ☆ **Play Plastic Boy as reluctant and Arthur as sincere.** ⚠⚠ **The only genuinely vicious person in the building is Alicia**, and the adventure is much better if the players notice that.
- ☆☆☆ **Give Karma for theatre, as instructed.** The penny out the window. The taunting over an unencrypted transceiver. Offering to take a beating for a stranger. ⚠ **This is the one adventure in the campaign that explicitly pays for style.**
- ☆☆ **And close on the fallout, which is the sharpest thing in the book.** ***"The result of the attack will be the opposite of what the terrorists hoped to achieve. Dunkelzahn will look bad; the incident will simply remind everyone forcibly that the dragon is not a human or anything that resembles one****, no matter how much time he spends in human-looking form."* ☆ His staff disown the Adventists, **Kyle Haeffner starts appearing in his place, and Dunkelzahn appears only in human form** until something else bumps it off the news. ⚠⚠⚠ **A cult of his own believers costs him more than his enemies ever managed, and the fix is for the dragon to stop looking like a dragon.**

5.3 · Ghost Story

SOURCE

📕 ***Super Tuesday!*** (FASA), adventure 4 of 5. ☆☆ **Seattle.**

☆ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **1** · getting the goods on Brackhaven **1** · ☆☆ **putting the ghost to rest 1.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS IS THE BEST TWIST IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE AND THE HARDEST EPISODE IN THE CAMPAIGN TO RUN WELL.** It opens with a child being smothered, from inside the child. Read the whole entry before you schedule it, and know your table.

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⚠⚠⚠ THE SECRET, STATED PLAINLY

In 2011 a wealthy Seattle businessman named Charles Brackhaven had a son, Kenneth. His wife died of minor complications shortly after the birth, in a hospital too swamped with changeling cases to care for her properly. ⚠ Charles clung to the boy — and then, over years, **came to blame him for her death**, becoming *"convinced that Kenneth was unworthy of the sacrifice his mother had made so that he might live."* He punished him harshly for it.

⚠⚠ **In 2023, Kenneth goblinized into an ork.** The public record says his father spared no expense on specialists and that the boy **underwent a rare remission and recovered virtually unchanged.**

⚠⚠⚠ **None of that is true.** *"Charles Brackhaven saw nothing of Kenneth's pain during his goblinization. Instead,* ***he viewed the change as his son's final failure — a failure that could ruin his own image and career.*** *Determined to prevent his son's condition from damaging his livelihood,* ***Charles arranged for a 'merciful' death for his son as he lay in his hospital bed.***"

☆☆☆ **And then he replaced him.** *"He then found* ***a suitable SINless orphan who was surgically and psychologically altered to take Kenny's place.*** *That child,* ***conditioned to be the 'new' Kenny Brackhaven****, became the proper son and heir Charles had always wanted."* Raised by Charles and by **Uncle Karl — president of the Seattle chapter of the Humanis Policlub** — the boy learned to blame metahumans for everything wrong with the world. Charles died in 2044 and "Kenny" took the business.

⚠⚠⚠ **The archconservative candidate for President of the UCAS is a stolen SINless orphan wearing a murdered ork boy's name. He does not know it. And the murdered boy has been waiting thirty-four years in a hospital ward.**

WHAT HAPPENS

☆☆ **It begins with one of the player characters in a hospital bed** — after any job that put someone under a doctor — **and the first dream is the murder, experienced from inside the victim.**

> *"Your body feels strange...* ***you feel stiff and sore and oddly bent, as if you were wearing a body two sizes too large.*** ⚠⚠⚠ *You stir a bit again and suddenly* ***a soft mass is pushed hard into your face*** *and you awake. You fight and thrash, but the pain in your limbs and the drugs in your system make your struggles* ***tiny, feeble things.*** *You try to cry out, but you can't breathe...* ***as consciousness slips away from you and you are dragged down into darkness and certain death.***"
>
> ☆ *"You awaken in a cold sweat, clutching the bed sheets.* ***You're still alive!****... Just a nightmare.* ***You make a mental note to ask the doc to cut back on the fraggin' drugs.***"

☆☆☆ **Then the boy himself, and this is the passage to read slowly:**

> *"The ork boy glances in your direction with* ***deep, sad eyes that seem to look past you at someone or something standing just behind your shoulder.*** *You gaze to your side, but there's nothing there.*
>
> *'****Father?****' he says* ***in a pitiful voice that is far too deep for a child. 'It hurts. I'm sorry, please don't be mad. It hurts so much. Make it stop. Please, make it***

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> ***stop.'*** ⚠⚠ *A terrible wall of pain and fear tears through you and the boy seems to really look at you for the first time. '**I'm not a monster!**' he yells. '**I'm not! I'm just Kenny. Why do you all hate me? Help me, please help me.**'* ☆ *He starts sobbing and fades away like a mirage."*

☆ **Then it escalates over days:** chills in a room with a steady thermostat; small objects falling for no reason; ⚠⚠ **and then a news report on the Brackhaven campaign comes on and the trid screen cracks.** *"No hospital staff are ever present when these events occur, and no one can ever offer a satisfactory explanation."* ⚠ A character who becomes visibly jumpy gets *"false sympathy and increased doses of painkillers and sleeping drugs."*

> ✎ **WHOSE DREAM IT IS — cast this before the session, not during.**
>
> ☆ **The ghost goes to an ork or troll character first.** Failing that, **any character with a family member who goblinized**; then a dwarf or elf; then anyone.
>
> ⚠⚠ *"Make the dreams painful, **especially if the character himself goblinized.**"* ☆ A metahuman character who personally went through it makes an **Intelligence (4) Test** — and on a success, **you tell that player the sensations in the dream are the ones they felt during their own goblinization.**
>
> ☆☆ **That is the single sharpest instruction in the adventure**, and it means the casting decision is a real one. **Look at your party sheet and pick the person for whom this will hurt most, and be sure they want that.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND YOU CANNOT FIGHT IT.** *"Consider the ghost **more of a plot device than an actual critter.** If the characters attempt to banish or destroy the ghost through astral combat or magic, **fling the offending magician into unconsciousness and have him experience the nightmare.** ☆ This happens **each time** such an attempt is made until the characters get the hint that **brute force will not rid them of this haunting.**"*

☆ **Ignoring it also fails, slowly.** Weeks of ruined sleep and poltergeist nuisance make the characters *"emotional wrecks"*; after a month or so it gives up — ⚠ leaving *"a mildly unpleasant astral aura around the characters"* that makes astrally sensitive people **and all animals** uneasy near them.

THE INVESTIGATION

☆☆ **The hospital record exists and is useless in exactly the right way.** Cross-referencing the room number turns up **a Kenneth Brackhaven, age twelve, treated in 2023**, attending physician **"Dr. C. Falt" — ⚠ and the rest of the record missing.** ☆ Which is not sinister on its own: *"many hospital records were lost during the Crash of '29."*

⚠⚠ **Public records contain no mention of any ork named Kenneth Brackhaven.**

☆☆☆ **The legwork ladders are where the adventure does its real historical work.** Ask about the hospital and you get Goblinization Day as the people who were there remember it:

> ⚠⚠⚠ ***"That place saw a lot of goblinization day hit. It was full of people screaming and dying as they twisted and transformed right before your eyes. It was like a fraggin' war zone."***

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> ⚠⚠ *"Hospital staff and everyone treating the metas* ***like some horrible new disease victims.*** ☆***There was a lot of talk about putting some of them out of their misery and I wouldn't be surprised if it happened.***"

☆☆ **And on Brackhaven himself, at five successes, a street rumour that is almost exactly right and completely wrong about the method:**

> *"Kenny-boy and the old man didn't get along when he was a kid, but he came round to his father's way of seeing things.* ⚠⚠ ***If you ask me, old man Brackhaven had the kid rewired or something to make him Daddy's little golden boy.***"

⚠⚠ **The campaign headquarters is chilling because of how ordinary it is.** *"**No metahumans work for the Brackhaven campaign**, and none are present in the campaign headquarters.* ***If metahuman runners enter, the campaign workers stop their activities and stare.***" Security notifies Lone Star automatically. Nobody lays a hand on anyone.

☆ **Karl Brackhaven receives them smoothly** and offers the cover story — an early strain of VITAS, since recovered — while probing to find out whether they are reporters. ☆☆ A **Perception (6)** notices he is nervous. ⚠⚠ **A magician assensing him on a Perception (4) reads him as *very* nervous and afraid of the runners.** ⚠⚠⚠ *"If Karl Brackhaven has not already learned that someone is digging into Kenneth's secret past,* ***he certainly knows now.***"

☆☆ THE BRIBE, AND WHAT THE GHOST THINKS OF IT

"Mr. Smith" invites them to a private club in the shadow of the Space Needle. He explains that the matter of a Mr. Brackhaven has come to his attention — *"it doesn't matter how (**one must protect one's sources, after all**)"* — and that *"the last thing that this Mr. Brackhaven needs at this delicate juncture is people poking around."*

☆ **The offer is access codes to blind escrow accounts holding 5,000 nuyen each**, up to **10,000 nuyen per character**.

⚠⚠⚠ **Take it and the ghost turns on them.** *"The vengeful specter takes out its righteous fury on the runners by haunting them with terrible nightmares,* ***afflicting them with poltergeist phenomena at the most dangerous and annoying moments****, and generally doing everything in its power to make life miserable."*

☆☆☆ **And the book's clarification of what the ghost actually wants is the moral spine of the episode:** ***"The ghost cares nothing about the money — the runners can soak Karl Brackhaven and his family for all they're worth if they want — as long as the truth of the whole matter is revealed.***"

☆☆☆ DR. CHRISTINA FALT

She was an intern in 2023 and resigned that November. ⚠ Anyone with basic medical knowledge notices what is wrong with the record: **an intern would not normally be listed as attending physician on any case.** She now runs a shadow clinic in the Barrens, works through a fixer called **Walks-With-Yen**, and is selective about who she treats.

☆☆ **Her testimony is the finest piece of Goblinization Day writing in the knowledge base, and it should be delivered slowly and without interruption:**

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> *"When I first got out of med school, I was ready to take on the world.* ***I thought I could really make a difference and help to heal people.****"*
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ *"The hospital became overcrowded within hours, we were massively overworked,* ***and we were afraid.*** *Nobody wanted to admit it, but at the time* ***we had no idea what was happening.*** *There was talk of genetic mutations, bio-warfare agents, new and exotic retroviruses and the like,* ***but we were just guessing. There were thousands of people changing — many of them in terrible pain — but there was nothing we could do. I never felt so helpless.****"*

☆☆ **She does not remember the boy. She remembers the father.** *"We had patients piled ten or twelve to a room and this man* ***refused to allow any other patient in his son's room. Paid the hospital big nuyen for that privilege.****"*

⚠⚠ **And she names the fraud. Dr. Freeman** was the attending physician, paid for by the old man, and running a research project into treating goblinization. Two weeks in, he announced a breakthrough — *"no one had ever heard of a goblinization remission, so Freeman got a big grant to perform a study."* ☆ *"The project was* ***bogus from the start.*** *Freeman had nothing — no solid data, no viable theories,* ***not even any real evidence that remission was possible. But he did have a new backer.****"* ⚠ Falt raised concerns about his research practices **and was fired.** Freeman became head of services and had a long, lucrative career.

THE EVIDENCE, AND THE MAN SENT TO STOP THEM

☆☆ **Freeman was paranoid, and with cause.** *"He knew full well that his position and considerable personal fortune rested on his knowledge of* ***a murder, a child switch, and the brainwashing of a young boy.****"* So he kept everything — **on paper and on an optical disk** — and gave the disk to his mistress, **Karen Johanssen**, as insurance against the day his funding stopped.

⚠⚠ **She has never read either.** The papers came to her in a box when he died and went straight into the attic; the disk sits in a file labelled **"SGH YEARS."** ☆ She knows Charles Brackhaven made Freeman's career, and she knows the records concern Brackhaven and his son. **That is all she knows, and she has known it for years.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Karl hires a professional. Fletcher Quinn** is a physical adept and *"a respected kick artist"* who *"treats each job as* ***an intellectual exercise****, and plans and performs each assignment* ***with clinical detachment.*** ⚠ ***He bears the player characters no malice — he views them as no more than this week's targets.****"*

⚠ **He takes Johanssen the moment they leave her house**, interrogates her, has a decker send **an e-mail signed in her name**, and wires the meeting place — a sporting goods store — with enough explosives to level it. Then he waits on a nearby roof **with a radio detonator in one hand and a compound bow beside him.**

☆ **The blast is 10D inside the store, 8S for anyone immediately in front of the door.** Then he shoots — ⚠⚠ **targeting the least damaged-looking characters first, then obvious magicians, then orks, then the heavily armed.** ☆☆ His bow *"packs more punch than a gun and easily penetrates modern anti-ballistic body armor —* ***on occasion, arrows from his bow have even foiled 'anti-bullet' spells.****"* ⚠ In the second encounter the heads are **coated with a nerve toxin doing 6S on a Light wound or worse**, on top of the arrow damage.

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⭐ **He also never fights a losing hand.** *"Quinn lives by the adage 'discretion is the better part of valor.'* ***He never stands and fights against unreasonable odds.***"

⭐⭐⭐ **What is on the disk:** Freeman's full medical records including **tests and DNA files**, and **a written confession** describing his part in the death and the substitution, kept *"as a precaution should Charles Brackhaven decide to kill him."* ⚠ *"The material* ***conclusively proves*** *that the real Kenny Brackhaven was killed and that the current Mr. Brackhaven is a substitute."* ⭐ Encrypted; **Computer (6)** cracks it.

⭐⭐⭐ THE THREE ENDINGS — AND THE FIRST IS THE MOST POLITICALLY ASTUTE PAGE IN THE BOOK

① **EXPOSE IT.** Any of the major newsnets will pay **upwards of 100,000 nuyen.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And then Kenneth Brackhaven survives it.** *"Kenneth Brackhaven goes on national trideo a few days later and* ***makes a tearful confession to a shocked nation.*** *He says that he has discovered that the story is true, but he claims that* ***he was very, very sick at the time of the events and cannot remember that period of his life.*** ⚠⚠ ***Oddly enough, he is telling the truth.***"

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"The story generates* ***a firestorm of media interest in Brackhaven, which he uses to tout his political platform.*** ⚠⚠ ***Brackhaven's campaign falters initially but begins to recover quickly.***"

The runners hand a nation conclusive proof that its anti-metahuman candidate is a stolen orphan raised on a murdered ork child's name — and he converts it into free airtime and sympathy. ⚠ **The book refuses to let the truth be enough**, and you must not soften that.

⭐⭐ **But it does let the boy go.** *"Exposing the truth also allows Kenny Brackhaven's ghost to rest.* ***The ork boy's ghost appears to the characters one last time in a dream and smiles to them before walking away and fading into darkness.***"

⚠ It also makes **lifetime enemies of both Brackhavens** — *"so the runners had better hope that Brackhaven doesn't become president."*

② **BLACKMAIL.** He will trade money and political favours for silence, *"as long as their requests are not unreasonable"* — ⚠ while spending *"every spare moment plotting to rid himself of the player characters."* ⭐⭐ *"Runners who go with a blackmail scheme will be* ***riding a tiger.***" And the ghost keeps coming, **at the worst possible times.**

③ **HAND IT BACK AND WALK AWAY.** ⚠⚠⚠ *"Smart characters should know right off that this plan hasn't got a prayer...* ***The Brackhavens will accept the runners' offer and then discreetly arrange the runners' assassinations to eliminate any possibility of the truth ever coming to light.***"

> **✎ AND THE BOOK'S CONSEQUENCE-PACING ADVICE IS THE BEST IN THE CAMPAIGN — use it everywhere, not just here.**
>
> *"If the runners choose to blackmail Kenneth Brackhaven or cut some other deal with him,* ***don't have the world come crashing down on them right away.*** *Instead,* ***introduce the consequences of their actions during the course of several adventures.*** ⭐⭐ *This*

> *way, the runners **may not immediately discern the connection** between their decision and the mysterious assassination attempts and strange phenomena they begin to experience. ⚠ And after making the runners **feel** the consequences of their choice, **give them a chance to change their minds and do something about it.**"*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **Proof that a presidential candidate is a fabricated person** — and the discovery that proof does not decide elections.
- ☆☆ **Up to 100,000 nuyen** from a newsnet, or up to 10,000 each to walk away, or a blackmail arrangement they will not survive holding.
- ⚠⚠ **Karl Brackhaven as a permanent enemy** — and he already knows their faces.
- ☆ **Dr. Christina Falt**, a Biotech 8 shadow doctor who is *"unwilling to end her career as a healer"* — ⚠ and who has *"a lot of friends who owe her favors... some who even owe her their lives, and these friends will be most upset with anyone who does her harm."*
- ☆☆☆ **A boy who stops screaming.** ⚠ Only on ending ①.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Brackhaven survives the exposure and keeps campaigning**	⚠⚠ **The rest of Season Five, and the closing beat.** The players have to watch him poll
☆☆ **Whichever ending they chose**	⚠ **Several episodes later, deliberately unsignposted.** See the ✎ box
☆☆ **Fletcher Quinn, if he withdrew**	⚠ He does that. **A professional with no grudge who will simply be hired again**
☆ **Dr. Falt and Walks-With-Yen**	☆☆ **A street doc the party has earned** — worth more in Season 7 than any nuyen from this job
⚠ **Karen Johanssen**, if she lived	An innocent who was tortured because the runners knocked on her door

> **CROSSOVER — none, and this episode must not have one.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **This is the most human hour in the campaign and a Fourth World echo would cheapen it.** A father who murdered his child for goblinizing, a hospital that could not cope, and a nation that shrugs at the proof — **all of it needs to be exactly as small and as local as it is.**

> ☆☆ **There is a temptation here and you should name it to yourself and refuse it.** Goblinization, the return of the metahuman races, the Awakening as a recurrence — **the register has a great deal to say about all of that.** ⚠ None of it belongs in a room where a twelve-year-old is asking why everyone hates him. **Say nothing, plant nothing, and let this one be about people.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **THE BIG ONE — AND IT WAS SET UP TWO SEASONS AGO.** In **3.1** the team took a job from a Mr. Johnson posing as an Aztechnology executive with a faked expense trail. ⚠⚠ **That man was Karl Brackhaven**, head of the Central Seattle chapter of the Humanis Policlub, and the outline's note at the time read: *"They will see this man again **in a presidential debate**, and they will be **the only people in the room who have taken his money.**"*

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⭐⭐ **Here he is, running his nephew's campaign, lying smoothly to their faces about a dead child.** ⚠ **Do not have him recognise them, and do not have anyone point it out.** ⭐⭐⭐ **If a player says it, that is the payoff. If nobody does, he is simply a man they have met before and cannot place, which is very nearly as good.**

⚠ **And 5.1's shape repeats with the polarity reversed.** Two episodes ago they saved a candidate's life and he fundraised off the corpses. **Here they destroy a candidate's biography and he fundraises off that.** ⭐ *This season, nothing the runners do to a politician does what they expect.*

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Talk to the player whose character gets the dream, out of session, before you run it.** ⭐ The adventure works because it is genuinely upsetting; **that is a thing to offer, not to spring.**
- ⭐⭐ **Run the first dream in the second person and do not explain it afterwards.** No test, no aura, no helpful NPC. **A nightmare, and a joke about the painkillers.**
- ⚠⚠ **Let them try to banish it once.** ⭐ The rule is that the offending magician goes unconscious and lives the nightmare — **and it repeats every time they try.** That is how the table learns the shape of the episode.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Deliver Falt's monologue whole.** No interruptions, no rolls. ⚠ *"There were thousands of people changing — many of them in terrible pain — but there was nothing we could do. I never felt so helpless."* **It is the reason the setting's oldest atrocity feels real.**
- ⚠ **Play the campaign office silence.** Nobody threatens the metahuman runners. **Everyone just stops working and looks at them.**
- ⭐⭐ **Offer the bribe honestly and let them take it if they want.** ⚠ Then bring the ghost, hard — and remember what the book says it actually wants: **not the money, the truth.** ⭐ Runners can rob the Brackhavens blind *and* expose them, and the boy will be satisfied.
- ⭐ **Quinn should leave.** He is a professional with no feelings about them; ⚠⚠ **a Quinn who withdraws to try again is worth far more than a Quinn who dies on a rooftop.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And when they expose it, let it fail.** ⭐ Run the tearful confession on national trideo. Run the polling recovery. **Then let one of them say the thing out loud, and do not answer it.**

5.4 · Strange Attraction — standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Super Tuesday!*** (FASA), adventure 2 of 5. ⭐ **The Tír border, then Seattle.**

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **2** · ⭐ **holding on to the key for the whole adventure 1** · **keeping Bono alive 1.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE ONE STRUCTURAL WARNING: THIS EPISODE OPENS WITH THE PLAYERS ALREADY HAVING FAILED A JOB THEY NEVER PLAYED.** The whole adventure is reconstruction. ⚠ **Do not run it in a season slot where the table is expecting momentum** — and do not run it immediately after a session that ended on a cliffhanger, because it opens on a blackout.

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⚠⚠ WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED, WHICH THE PLAYERS MUST RECONSTRUCT

Two weeks ago a fixer called Beaumont Noble — "Bono" — hired them on behalf of **the Illuminates of the New Dawn**, a DeeCee magical order backing presidential candidate **Rozilyn Hernandez**. The job: collect an item in Portland and get it back to Seattle past the Tír authorities.

☆ **Posing as Illuminates on borrowed diplomatic passes and lapel pins, they met a rich art collector named Birch Kirby**, ate an excellent dinner, and were handed **an orichalcum key with a strange magical aura.**

⚠⚠ **Then their forged papers caught up with them on the way out.** The border patrol followed standard procedure — **dosed them with laés and dumped them outside the Tír.**
☆☆ *"The key, lapel pins and some bizarre flashbacks are the only clues the runners have to their activities of the past few days."*

⚠⚠⚠ **Everything since has gone wrong without them.** A Tír recovery team traced the key to Birch Kirby, **extracted the runners' descriptions from him, and killed him.** Bono, who never got his delivery, assumed he had been double-crossed and **went underground to escape his own employers.**

☆☆☆ **So four parties now want the key and none of them care about the runners: Tír Tairngire**, whose Ghosts want it back before anyone learns it is gone; **the Illuminates**, who paid for it; **Aztechnology**, which has heard; ⚠ **and all of them will kill for it.**

WHAT HAPPENS

☆ **They wake in a clearing in the woods with no memory, no ID, no heavy weapons, and evening wear.** *"You wake up feeling like you've just slept off a three-day binge… **That's when you realize that there's no clock. In fact, there's no bed, no bedroom and no building. No buildings at all.**"*

⚠ **Then four barghests charge them**, which is the adventure's way of establishing that the amnesia is not a puzzle to be solved at leisure.

☆☆ **And then the inventory, which is the actual hook.** *"You're all **dressed like corporate slags out for a posh night on the town.** No heavy ordnance or ammo, either. **None of you have any ID, which is unusual.** All of you are wearing **identical pins on your lapels**, but you have no idea what they mean. ⚠⚠ One of you is carrying **an old-fashioned mechanical key** about ten centimetres long, made of some goldish-coloured metal. **None of you can recall seeing it before, though it looks oddly familiar.**"*

☆☆☆ THE KEY

Ten centimetres, ornate, and the shaft and head are carved to resemble a tree. Parts of the filigree are **worn smooth with age and handling.** ⚠⚠ ***"The key is virtually indestructible. The runners cannot even scratch it, no matter what physical or magical force they apply to it. This is real magic at work."***

☆☆ **The astral examination ladder is the whole of what anyone in 2057 can learn about it** — an **Astral Perception (8)**:

Successes	What the magician sees
1	A powerful enchantment **of a kind the magician has never seen before.** The aura is difficult to read

⚠ **2**	An aura of **great age** — *"it is impossible to tell how old, but the magician can sense that **it is truly ancient**"*
☆☆ **3**	Its magic is **concerned primarily with unlocking and opening**, and it can channel very powerful forces
☆☆☆ **4+**	Its power can be used for **unbinding** and other forms of magical unlocking

☆ **In a magician's hand it functions as a Rating 8 power focus for anything that opens, unlocks or unbinds — dispelling, banishing — *and it requires no bonding.*** ⚠ Which is, on its own, an artefact worth killing several people for.

> ✎ **THE FLASHBACK MECHANIC — the best amnesia handling in the knowledge base, and it costs nothing to run.**

> ☆ The characters remember nothing, **but they are not blank.** Specific objects trigger involuntary fragments, ⚠ *"and **moments of stress or panic may induce them as well** if the gamemaster so desires. ☆☆**Stress-induced flashbacks can be particularly dangerous, as they distract a character from the task at hand.**"*

Trigger	The fragment
The lapel pin	The same logo on **a giant banner, with a woman giving a speech in front of it.** ⚠ The memory *"seems to come from a simlink projection"*
Their clothes	Handing papers to a guard **who is deferential and wishes them well**
☆ **The key**	A long dinner in a large dining room, and **a short man bringing in a locked box and talking in hushed tones**
⚠ **The gear bag**	Being **surrounded by elves**, in a room with bright lights, **hearing the same questions over and over**

> ☆☆ **Fire one in the middle of a firefight.** The rules explicitly allow it and it is the single thing that makes the amnesia feel like a condition rather than a plot device.

BONO, AND THE PEOPLE CHASING HIM

☆ **They get home** — a **Survival (4)** for shelter and water, then Highway 5, ☆☆ where *"the runners have the advantage of **looking like poor, lost corporates** rather than hardened shadowrunners"* — ⚠ or by hijacking one of the drone hauling trucks running Portland to Seattle, **which any character with a vehicle control rig can simply override.**

⚠⚠ **Then a message from a stranger who clearly knows them.** *"Where the frag are you? ...I've got to talk to you about the job. There have been some, uh, **complications.** Meet me at the 93 as soon as you can... **This is fraggin' big, omae. Don't tell anyone.**"* ☆ *"Who the frag was that? And why is he calling you like he knows you or something?"*

☆☆ **The Underworld 93** is *"a huge, vaulted, ferrocrete building [that] looks like the converted warehouse it is,"* its walls criss-crossed with catwalks full of club rats **leaning over the railings to yell at the band.** ☆ The runners are known here, which usually helps.

⚠⚠ **They spot Bono — small, scrawny, unshaven, wire-framed glasses, disappearing into an oversized synthleather jacket — about four seconds before he spots something worse.** *"His face takes on a look that screams, '**oh, drek!**'... ☆☆☆In the direction the poor slot*

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*was looking, you see **three tall, long-haired elves clad in dark, long coats** running and pushing through the crowd."*

⭐ **The instruction for this scene is pace:** *"Make sure the players get the message that they're in trouble right from the start. **Keep the scene moving and don't give the players time to ask a lot of questions yet.**"*

⚠️ **Leave Bono and the Ghosts take him.** Intervene and **they immediately switch to taking a runner alive instead** — ⭐ using melee, stun attacks and their mage's sleep and bind spells, **avoiding deadly force if at all possible.**

⭐⭐⭐ SILVERBLADE, AND THE BEST PIECE OF GM ADVICE IN THE BOOK

Speren Silverblade is a Grade 3 initiate and a special agent of the Council of Princes, and he is *"a loyal citizen of Tir Tairngire"* who *"truly believes that **elves are superior to other metahumans**"* and that they are *"the **caretakers** of the world"* with a duty to stop everyone else ruining it.

> *"**You have made some very important people very angry, my little goronagee.** ...The parties I represent are not interested in retribution against you, but they do require information about the individuals who hired you... **I have been authorized to reward you if you cooperate. If you withhold information and try to shield your former employers, I have orders to punish you.**"*

⭐⭐ **He interrogates them behind a quickened Analyze Truth spell**, assumes at first that *"we don't know what you're talking about"* is a feeble lie — ⚠️ **and is genuinely puzzled when it never trips the spell.** He keeps working at it, then touches one runner on the forehead, **casts Mind Probe** — and ⭐ *"after a moment he **curses in Sperethiel.**"*

Then he offers the deal: identify who hired them, and they keep whatever they earned **plus amnesty for the smuggling.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND IF THEY ACCEPT, HE ASKS THEM TO SWEAR AN ELVEN BLOOD OATH** — a shallow cut across the palm and a declaration of loyalty for the duration of the run. ⚠️ The other Ghosts are visibly taken aback that *"barbarians like the player characters"* are being allowed to partake of the ritual at all.

> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ *"**The blood oath is merely a social convention among the Ghosts and has no actual binding power over the runners — but don't tell that to the players.**"*

⭐⭐ **A ceremony with no mechanical weight whatsoever, which every table will treat as unbreakable.** Run it with total gravity and never mention it again.

⚠️ **And Silverblade himself does not know what the key is.** *"He knows only that his mentors consider it of the utmost importance, **and that is enough for him.**"*

THE SNIPER, AND THE SHAPE OF THE THING

⭐⭐ **The middle of the adventure is supposed to feel like a wall.** *"Your street contacts can't tell you a thing... **Nobody seems to know — or is willing to talk about — your run and the strange key. And that can mean only one thing: someone wants to keep the whole thing very, very quiet.**"*

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⭐⭐⭐ **And then the thought that follows from it, which the book puts in the players' mouths for them: "⚠⚠ *If someone really wants this whole affair buried, it would make sense for them to come and bury* you *sooner or later.*"** — and a glint of chrome from a high place where no chrome should be.

⭐ **Belladonna** is Aztechnology's answer to the key: **Essence 1.26**, full-replacement cyberlimbs, wired reflexes 2, a Ranger Arms sniper rifle and **throwing spikes tipped with a neuro-stun toxin**, *"a huntress who lives for the thrill of the hunt and the kill"* who *"likes to* ***toy with her prey*** *when possible to extend the pleasure."*

⚠ **The first shot misses if they react at all** — *"after that, all bets are off and the runners are on their own."* ⭐ Capture her and she is **+4 to all interrogation target numbers**; kill her and she carries no identification and a certified credstick. ⚠⚠ **And killing her is expensive:** *"Aztechnology assumes they are tougher than previously thought and* ***continues to send various hit men*** *against them…* ***the Big A has a long memory and it won't let word get out that a bunch of drek-eating shadowrunners offed one of its best operatives.***"

⭐⭐ HOW IT ENDS — WITH A CHOICE THAT DOES NOT MATTER MUCH, AND THE BOOK KNOWS IT

⚠⚠ ***"None of the interested parties — Tir Tairngire, the Illuminates of the New Dawn, or Aztechnology — really cares about the fate of the shadowrunners. Each party is primarily interested in the key.***" Each makes an offer. Each promises protection from the other two. Each will move to stop a handover to a rival.

⭐⭐⭐ **The players decide who gets it, and the moment it leaves their hands the pressure simply stops.** *"Once the key is out of the characters' hands, the other factions will lose interest in the runners.* ***Until then, however, the situation remains very tense.***"

⭐ **And the book hands them one real piece of leverage:** the key cannot be destroyed, ⚠ **but it can be hidden — and knowing where it is is a bargaining chip.** *"The gamemaster determines the potential success of any such plan and must improvise the reactions of the parties."*

⚠⚠ **The Illuminates' own employer never appears in person.** The "Nicholas Grace" the runners meet is **a flunky wearing a mask spell**, sustained by the real Grace **watching through clairvoyance from somewhere nearby.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE MEMORIES NEVER COME BACK.** *"The runners' memories of the trip to Portland* ***cannot be restored through any known means.***"

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠⚠ **A permanent hole in their own biographies**, which the book explicitly hands to the gamemaster: ⭐⭐ ***"Other events not described in this adventure may have occurred during the run in Portland — events that can come back and haunt the players during any slow point in a campaign.***"
- ⚠⚠ **Three organisations keeping tabs on them.** Have contacts mention, occasionally, that **Ghost agents and Big A operatives have been asking about them.** ⭐ And the Illuminates put them **on a blacklist** — ⚠⚠ *"if Rozilyn Hernandez should become president,* ***she will likely throw some good old government harassment at the runners.***"
- ⭐ **Bono**, if he lived — *"a fair dealer and a decent contact who has simply gotten in over his head."*

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- ☆☆ **An elven blood oath they believe is binding.**
- ⚠ **Nothing else.** ***"The key itself disappears from sight, regardless of which group recovers it."***

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The missing week in Portland**	⚠ **Whenever you want it.** The book's own gift: **a blank space in the characters' history that the GM owns outright**
☆☆ **The blood oath**	⚠⚠ The first time Silverblade calls it in — ☆ **and they will honour it, because nobody ever told them they didn't have to**
☆☆ **Aztechnology, if Belladonna died**	⚠ **A standing grudge with a corporation that does not forget.** ☆ Feeds the Aztlan spine from **1.5 → 2.1 → 3.2 → 4.6**
☆ **The Illuminates' blacklist, and Hernandez**	**The closing beat**, if she polls well — and Season 6 if she does not
☆☆ **Ghost factionalism** — *"divided loyalties between the different Princes on the Council"*	⚠ **Exactly what 4.2 ran on.** ☆ A second confirmation, from a different book
☆ **The Phoenix, a lore store in Denver that burned down**	⚠ Unspent. ☆☆ **And they already have a Denver errand from 4.5**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE KEY, AND THIS ONE IS ALMOST FREE.**

☆☆ **Orichalcum is Tier A in the register: the same impossible metal in both worlds, and in both worlds it is *made, not mined*.** So an artefact of orichalcum whose aura reads as **"truly ancient"** and **"of a kind the magician has never seen before"** is, without a single word of explanation, **an object from the Fourth World sitting on a table in Seattle.**

⚠⚠ **What it does is the second half of the tell.** Its magic is **unlocking, opening and unbinding** — a Rating 8 focus **that needs no bonding**, which is not how any focus in 2057 works. ☆ And the legwork ladder supplies the line to say out loud and never explain: *"it looked **older than God** to him and **it drew its power in a funny sort of way.** ⚠ Never did find out what he meant by that."*

☆☆☆ **AND THE THIRD PARTY IS THE POINT. Aztechnology wants a key that unbinds things** — ⚠⚠ two episodes after the runners stood on an outcropping and watched a blood magus try to open a door. **Say nothing.** The players have everything they need to be uneasy, and being uneasy is the entire objective.

⚠ **Nothing is spent here, which is why it is safe to plant.** The book takes the key off the board no matter who wins it: *"the key itself disappears from sight, regardless of which group recovers it."* ☆ **A Fourth World artefact passes through their hands, does not get explained, and vanishes.** That is the correct outcome.

⚠⚠⚠ **One-way rule: everything above is planting.** No NPC identifies the metal, the age, or the maker. **Nobody in 2057 can.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **4.2, mechanically.** The Ghosts appeared there as a Grade 3–4 unit loaned to one Prince against another; **here they are Grade 1 and answering the Council directly** — ⚠ and the legwork ladder confirms at four successes that ***"some factionalism exists among the Ghosts,***

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fueled by divided loyalties between the different Princes on the Council. Apparently it's led to problems before." ⭐ **A second, independent book saying what the players already suspected.**

⭐ **The Tír ladder generally — 1.6 → 2.5 → 2.10 → 4.2 → 4.5 → here.** ⚠⚠ This is the first time the runners are in Tír custody **and let go**, which is its own kind of information about how little they matter.

⚠ **And 5.1's Aztechnology, quietly.** The Big A has been in the background of this campaign since Season One. **Here it turns up for an artefact, not a contract.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the prologue as a handout or read-aloud before anything else, and let them be captured.** ⚠ *"Dose them and dispose of them"* — and the elf with the syringe smiling and saying *"well, well.* ***A volunteer."*** **The players do not get to play this scene; that is the point.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let anyone solve the amnesia.** ⭐ There is no test, no spell, no clinic. **The memories are gone permanently and the adventure only works if the table accepts that in the first ten minutes.**
- ⭐⭐ **Fire flashbacks at bad moments.** Mid-negotiation, mid-firefight, mid-sentence. ⚠ The rules permit it and it is the difference between an amnesia plot and an amnesia *condition*.
- ⭐ **The barghests are a wake-up call, not an encounter.** They are also a reminder that the party has no guns, which is the fact the next hour runs on.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the blood oath completely straight.** Shallow cut, formal words, the other Ghosts visibly disgusted. ⚠⚠ **Never tell them it means nothing.** If they honour it at cost to themselves later, **that was worth more than the key.**
- ⚠ **Let the middle be a wall.** Contacts who know nothing, and then contacts who will not say. ⭐ **The silence is the clue**, and the book gives you the players' own conclusion to hand them.
- ⭐⭐ **Let them hide the key if they think of it.** ⚠ It is indestructible and they cannot use it against three organisations, **but knowing where it is is the only card they hold.**
- ⚠⚠ **And let the ending be small.** Whoever gets the key, the pressure just stops. ⭐⭐⭐ **No thanks, no explanation, no reveal — three great powers lose interest in them the same afternoon.** That is the most Shadowrun ending in the season.

5.5 · The Standalone Pair — pick two of three

SOURCE

📕 ***Shadows of the Underworld*** (FASA), adventures 2, 3 and 4. ⭐⭐ **Run two of them and leave the third in the world as something that happened to somebody else.**

⚠ ***Two Solitudes*** **additionally requires the** ***California Free State*** **sourcebook.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The recommendation is unambiguous: run** ***Double Dipping*****, and pick your second freely.** It is the only one of the three that changes what the sprawl thinks of the player characters, and Season Five is the season to spend that.

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> **🔪 WHY THERE IS A DOUBLE SLOT HERE AT ALL.**
>
> Season Five is eight episodes long and **six of them are about the election.** ⭐ This slot exists so that two of them are about something else — ⚠️ and so that the run-up to **5.8** has some ordinary life in it to lose.
>
> ⭐⭐ **All three are genuinely good and none of them is filler.** Choose by what your table has been short of: **a moral catastrophe of their own making** (*Double Dipping*), **a dragon** (*C.O.D.*), or **a quiet, sad, entirely human investigation** (*Two Solitudes*).

⭐⭐⭐ OPTION A — *DOUBLE DIPPING*, AND THIS IS THE ONE WITH TEETH

Seattle. The runners take a straightforward kidnapping job and become Public Enemy Number One when security footage of the snatch reaches the trid networks.

⭐ **Karma — team:** surviving **1** · threat **1** · ⭐⭐ **rescuing Kinsey 3** · giving Gilly the evidence **1** · ⚠️⚠️ **refusing to rescue Kinsey −2. Individual:** ⭐⭐ **refusing Malcolm Zandras's reward +1** · ⚠️ **bargaining for a bigger one −2.**

THE PLOT THEY ARE INSIDE

⚠️⚠️ **Burt Aronson runs a local Humanis chapter and has spent years successfully setting metahuman groups against each other.** With Brackhaven in the race, the policlub has decided to do *"whatever it takes"* — and its strategic objective is a public-relations one: *"they must so thoroughly discredit metahumans in the public mind that the average human will vote for Brackhaven as **the 'savior' of embattled human beings against the 'innately violent' metahuman hordes.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **So Aronson hires shadowrunners to kidnap Kinsey Zandras, the daughter of one of Seattle's few prominent ork businessmen — specifically so he can blame metahumans for it.** ⚠️ *"This, he believes, will blow the lid off simmering racial tensions **between different groups in the metahuman community**, provoking them to acts of retaliatory violence that will drive ordinary humans into Brackhaven's camp in droves."*

⭐ **And there is a second, grubbier motive.** Kinsey's father owns **Zandras Shipping**, which holds exclusive routes into Salish-Shidhe territory; Aronson intends to blackmail him into **running guns for the policlub.** ⚠️ *"The idea of using a **metahuman-owned company** to aid Humanis's war against metahumans also appeals to Aronson's sense of irony."*

THE PARTY, AND THE LINE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT

Kinsey shares a Renton townhouse with her best friend Emily Daly, and tonight they are throwing a party for about twenty privileged metahuman friends. ⭐ Crashing it is easy; **sneaking the grounds is not** — four attack dogs and six patrolling guards, ⚠️⚠️ the dogs being *"Dobermans bred to kill"* with **steel-tipped teeth and their larynxes surgically removed so they cannot bark.**

⭐⭐ **The book wants this played loose.** *"A fun night out at a party of oversexed, bored, rich young adults… **Make it feel businesslike but very loose, with unexpected twists and turns in every room.**"* ⚠️ Wear chic streetwear and the other guests will read the team as

poseurs rather than actual runners — *"that may make them sexier or laughable, depending on who is looking."*

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN THE QUIETEST LINE IN THE ADVENTURE, WHICH IS PLACED IN THE MIDDLE OF A KIDNAPPING:**

> *"**The runners should also come away with the feeling that none of these kids seem to notice or care how many different kinds of metahumans are there. Despite their differences, they all seem to be friends.** ⭐⭐**Maybe there is hope for the Sixth World after all.**"*

⚠⚠⚠ **The team is there to destroy exactly that, on behalf of a man who is betting it is not true.**

⚠ **The mark is not what the job description implied either.** Kinsey is upstairs in what everyone calls **the Party Room**, which is where she and her friends do BTLs; the others are near-catatonic and **she is awake, wired into a warped reissue of *"Neal, the Ork Barbarian,"* and swinging.** ⭐ Asking too many questions about where the Party Room is **marks the team as outsiders immediately.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE CAMERAS, WHICH CANNOT BE BEATEN

The townhouse has a passive trideo system that is local, not Matrix-controllable, **and invisible to the runners** — ⚠⚠ *"and Aronson has carefully failed to mention them in the briefing."*

⭐⭐ **And the book closes every door in advance.** Disable the cameras and *"have one of the party guests **just happen to catch the kidnapping on a cybereye camera** for 10 or 15 seconds"* — ⭐ possibly an Aronson plant. Snatch her somewhere else entirely and one of Aronson's people, **who has been following them all along**, films it. ⚠ Botch it completely and *"the runners are extremely unlikely to be able to snatch Kinsey — **but their attempt will still be recorded.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **THE BROADCAST IS THE BEST READ-ALOUD IN THE BOOK BECAUSE OF WHAT THE RUNNER IS DOING WHEN IT LANDS:**

> *"As you bring a spoonful of **soy sherbet** to your lips, you tell yourself you deserve a little vacation. You hit the remote and the trid pops to life...* ⚠⚠ ***Suddenly you shoot to your feet, spilling your snack across the futon and the floor. That's you on the trid**, taking out a security guard at Kinsey Zandras's townhouse!... **The footage is grainy — not good enough to ID you for sure, but good enough to make people ask questions. More than good enough to make you queasy watching it.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE SOCIAL ANALYSIS IS THE SHARPEST THING IN THE COLLECTION

⚠⚠ ***"The footage does not show the runners' faces clearly — but it does show their metatypes."*** And from that single fact the book derives a four-way fracture:

- ⚠ **The ork community** sees non-ork runners and reads it as *"proof that other metahumans are just as bad as humans — **maybe worse, because they are in a sense betraying 'their own.'**"*
- **Human runners are not spared** — the orks hate them too.

- ⚠ **And many of their fellow humans regard them as scum simply for associating with metahumans**, never mind the crime.
- ⚠⚠ **Non-ork metahumans fiercely resent being called filthy racists** because of *"the actions of a few street-grunge shadowrunners."*

☆☆ ***"A lot of anger will boil up on all sides, and some of it will spill out into sporadic violence."*** **One piece of grainy footage sets four groups against each other, and it works because of what it does and does not show.**

☆☆☆ THE MECHANIC THAT MAKES IT WORK — SOCIAL HEAT AS AN ESCALATING TARGET NUMBER

> ☆☆☆ ***"Increase the listed target numbers for all contacts by 1 for every 24 hours that elapse*** *after the broadcast of the incriminating footage.* ⚠⚠ ***If Aronson has released a runner's name to the networks, target numbers for that character should increase by 2 every 24 hours."***

⚠ **That is the whole adventure in one rule.** The longer they investigate, the harder investigating gets. ☆ *"The more the runners ask, the greater suspicion they arouse."* ⚠⚠ And if they decide they have done nothing wrong and sit still, **Aronson leaks one of their names to the press** — *"the gamemaster may decide to do this anyway just to ratchet up the pressure."*

THE THIRTY-SIX, AND THE REPORTER

⚠⚠ **The New Weathermen find them first** — radical metahuman-rights militants who target racist groups, and who have been watching Aronson for years. Three of them get out of a van; ☆☆☆ then ***"four more vans come screaming out of the darkness… After number 25, you stop counting."***

Derrick asks three questions: how they know Aronson, whether he hired them, ⚠⚠ **and whether they are his willing allies.** *"If he believes that the answer to the last question is yes,* ***he will take out his fury at the kidnapping on them."***

☆☆☆ **And the book's own note on the scene is the reason to run it:**

> ***"For the first time in their lives, the runners can actually win by telling the whole truth."***

⚠ **Get it wrong and thirty-six people beat them** — who *"showed up at the meet* ***anticipating a rollicking good time thumping some buddies of their favorite human-supremacist."*** ⚠⚠⚠ And winning that fight is worse than losing it: *"the news media will be flooded with stories of metahuman violence…* ***no one will believe the runners' story after this — and Aronson may well get the explosion he wants."***

☆☆ **Gilly Rellets is the way out.** An elven reporter for **Underground News** covering the metahuman beat, becoming *"the* ***voice of metahumanity*** *in Seattle"* — and, unlike the Weathermen, ☆ *"Gilly does not assume that the runners are Aronson's allies."* He trades **the location of Aronson's safe house** and **a chance to clear their names** for the exclusive, promises anonymity, and ☆☆ **will vouch for them to the Weathermen** if that meeting has not happened yet.

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⚠⚠⚠ **And then the ambush, which is beautifully staged.** *"Once they have told Gilly their story, the runners should feel* ***overwhelming relief.*** *During the interview,* ***the bar's few other patrons gradually leave****; by the time the runners wind down,* ***they and Gilly are the only ones left.*** ☆☆☆ *Because the runners and Gilly are caught up in the story,* ***noticing the emptiness of the bar requires a successful Perception (11) Test.****"*

⚠ **Shelly's Humanis crew recognises Gilly on sight — he is at the top of their most-wanted list — and marks him for death personally.** ☆☆ *"The runners should protect Gilly above all else.* ***They need him to spread the truth, clear their names and tell them where Aronson is.****"*

THE SAFE HOUSE, AND THE FILE THAT SAVES THEM

☆ **A crumbling three-storey brownstone that is also a working hotel** — a half-drunk clerk who knows nothing, ⚠ a "bum" in the lobby who is actually **Aronson's lookout** (and Shelly's boyfriend), a **street samurai hiding from Lone Star on the second floor with an APDS-loaded M22A2**, and on the third **an electric eye and three Force 3 watchers** — ☆☆ *"shaped like* ***little Humanis men*** *and carrying vicious-looking tridents.* ***When attacking, their weapons enlarge to four times their normal size.****"*

⚠⚠ **And Aronson has taken his face off.** *"Aronson* ***looks different*** *than when the runners last saw him;* ***he is clearly human, not elven*** *— and he is loaded for bear."*

☆☆☆ **The evidence exists because he is afraid of his own side.** *"This room also holds all of Aronson's important records…* ***Aronson uses this extensive documentation of his activities to extract ever-greater amounts of money and power from those above him on the Humanis food chain. The records are his safety net as well as his proof of loyalty and effectiveness.****"* ☆ The Zandras material is on **a chip labelled *URBAN BRAWL SCORES*.**

⚠ **The blackmail file he keeps to protect himself from Humanis is the thing that clears the runners' names.**

HOW IT ENDS

☆☆ **Gilly's story does not name them.** It describes *"a group of shadowrunners* ***cruelly and unwittingly used by a bigot*** *to further an evil scheme of whose true intent they knew nothing"* — and the fury of Seattle's metahuman communities **turns from each other onto Humanis.**

☆☆☆ **And Kinsey decides for herself what she thinks of them.** She was high at the time but *"she may* ***vaguely remember*** *the runners"* — ⚠ *"she may mention the runners' involvement to her father* ***or keep it to herself — depending on how they treat her*** *after getting her out."*

☆ **Malcolm Zandras offers 9,000 nuyen each.** ⚠⚠ *"Truly tactless runners can attempt to bargain up the reward,* ***but will get nowhere****"* — and the Karma table charges them two points for trying.

OPTION B — *C.O.D.*

☆☆ **A "pick up a package" milk run in which the package is a stolen dragon egg and the runners are the disposable half of a false-flag operation.**

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Lawrence Carroll of the Human Nation is stoking metahuman gang violence to help Brackhaven, laundering the contracts through yakuza middlemen so nothing traces back. ⚠⚠ **In response to Dunkelzahn's rise in the polls, he escalates:** a top-flight team steals **a single egg from the lair of Masaru, a young great eastern dragon on Vancouver Island** — and then *"some **less expensive, more expendable** shadowrunners (guess who!)"* are hired to babysit it **until Masaru wakes up and comes looking.**

☆☆☆ **The delivery address is the entire point.** Carroll sends the runners to a busy downtown block *"thereby ensuring that Masaru's attempt to reclaim his property will appear as an **'unprovoked attack'** and attract as much public attention as possible."* ⚠ The Human Nation's paramilitary wing will be on hand **to make sure the dragon, the egg and the runners all die there** — ☆ and *"Dunkelzahn's poll numbers will drop faster than a penny off a skyscraper."*

☆ **Run this one if the table wants a spectacle**, and because it is the season's second demonstration that **an attack framed as metahuman violence is worth more to Brackhaven than any policy.**

OPTION C — *TWO SOLITUDES*

☆☆ **Japanese-occupied San Francisco. A Yamatetsu accountant and his wife hire the team to find their missing son.** ⚠ Requires the *California Free State* sourcebook.

Sho Kojima is gay and has hidden it, because under the laws of occupied San Francisco *"the homosexual lifestyle"* is one of many **"protected cultures"** — ⚠⚠ meaning openly gay people *"are **not allowed to live within the city limits** or hold high-ranking positions"* and are pushed into enclaves across the bay.

⚠ **A corporate watchman found out and blackmailed him** into stealing his father's Yamatetsu access codes. ☆☆ Sho took the data **and then balked** — and, *"afraid and angry, with no one to turn to,"* tried to conjure an elemental to kill the man. ⚠⚠ **It escaped his control and became a free spirit, an animus, imprinted with his own needs and desires.** ☆☆☆ **The spirit took the name Hiro, and the two of them fell in love and ran.**

☆ **Run this one if the table wants an investigation rather than a fight.** ⚠ It is the quietest adventure in Season Five and the only one whose answer is a person rather than a plot.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **From *Double Dipping*: a reputation they have to rebuild, and the memory of having earned the damage.** ⚠ Plus **9,000 nuyen each** they may not want.
- ☆☆ **Gilly Rellets**, who has *"a considerable amount of respect among the city's metahumans"* and owes them a scoop — ☆ **the best contact available in Season Five.**
- ⚠ **The New Weathermen**, as allies or as thirty-six enemies, depending entirely on whether they told the truth.
- ⚠⚠ **Burt Aronson, if he lived** — *"chafing for revenge,"* ☆ and *"even more powerful if Brackhaven makes it to the White House."*
- ☆ **From the second choice:** a very angry young dragon who knows their faces, **or** a boy who did not want to be found and a free spirit who loves him.

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PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **The runners' public reputation**	⚠⚠ **5.6 onward.** Whatever heat is left over is the atmosphere they carry into Chicago
⭐⭐ **Gilly Rellets**	⭐ **5.8**, where a reporter who will print their side is worth more than a gun
⚠⚠ **Burt Aronson alive**	**The closing beat.** A Humanis organiser who wins if Brackhaven wins
⭐ **Malcolm Zandras and Zandras Shipping**	⚠ Salish routes, unspent — ⭐⭐ **and Humanis still wants them**
⭐ **Masaru, if they ran *C.O.D.***	⚠ A young great dragon with a grievance. ⭐ **Season 8 has a room full of them**
⭐⭐ **Kinsey, if they were decent to her**	⚠ An ork heiress with a BTL habit who owes them her life **and has not told her father**

CROSSOVER — one sentence, and only if they run *Two Solitudes*.

⭐⭐ **The corporate watchman who blackmails Sho is Lofwyr's invention** — a standing network of people whose entire job is *"looking for **exploitable weaknesses** in people working for other corporations or anyone else who might get in Lofwyr's way."* ⭐ In this campaign Lofwyr crosses from the Fourth World **unchanged, name and all**, and this is what he does with six thousand years of practice: **not spies for secrets, but watchers for weaknesses, maintained indefinitely against people who have not yet crossed him.** ⚠ Plant the *method*, never the age.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND MASARU IN *C.O.D.* IS NOT CROSSOVER MATERIAL — DO NOT MAKE HIM ANY.** He is a young great eastern dragon with no entry in the register, and per the register's own standing principle, ⭐⭐ **an unassigned dragon is not a gap.** He is exactly what he appears to be: someone's child was stolen, and he came to get it back. **That is the whole of him and it is enough.**

⭐ ***Double Dipping* carries nothing at all**, and should not. It is a story about the Sixth World's own racism, engineered by an ordinary man, and it does not need a first age.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **5.3, and the players may finally see the machine whole.** Two episodes ago they proved the archconservative candidate is a fabricated person and watched him convert it into sympathy. ⚠⚠ **Here they discover they were personally used as raw material for the same campaign** — and *Double Dipping* names the strategy outright: **discredit metahumans thoroughly enough and the average human votes for Brackhaven as a saviour.**

⭐⭐ **And 3.1, again, at one remove.** They took Karl Brackhaven's money in Season Three. ⚠ **Here they take a Humanis chapter head's money without knowing it and it costs them their reputation.** ⭐ *Nobody needs to connect those out loud.*

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the party warm.** Let them flirt, let them talk, let them like these kids — ⚠⚠ **and then let them read the line about all those different metahumans being friends, and take one of them anyway.**

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- ⚠⚠ **Do not let them beat the cameras.** ☆ The book gives you three fallbacks and you should use whichever one they earn. **The footage is not a failure state; it is the premise.**
- ☆☆☆ **Run the escalating target numbers openly and let them feel it.** ⚠ +1 per day, +2 if named. **Say "that's a nine now" and let them work out why.**
- ☆☆ **The Weathermen scene is the best social encounter in Season Five.** ⚠ Thirty-six people, three questions, and *"for the first time in their lives, the runners can actually win by telling the whole truth."* **Do not accept a clever half-answer.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Make the Perception (11) roll for the emptying bar, out loud, after the relief has landed.** ☆ That sequence — confession, relief, silence, ambush — is worth staging carefully.
- ☆☆ **Give them the chance to refuse the reward.** It is worth a point of individual Karma and it is the only apology the adventure offers them. ⚠ **And charge the two-point penalty if they haggle. Without comment.**
- ☆ **Whichever second adventure you pick, run it *before* Double Dipping if you can.** ⚠⚠ The reputation damage should be the last thing that happens before **5.6**, so the team goes into the Containment Zone already unwelcome everywhere else.

5.6 · Casualties of War

SOURCE

📕 ***Super Tuesday!*** (FASA), adventure 3 of 5. ⚠⚠ **This one additionally requires the *BUG CITY* sourcebook** — the book says so itself, and the Containment Zone is not a place you can improvise.

⚠ **Gated on `world.chicago_sealed`**, set two seasons ago. ☆ The runners have been reading about this city on the newsnet since Season Three; **this is the episode where they climb into it.**

☆ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **2** · rescuing Penchyk **1** · ☆☆ **making allies of the ghouls 1** · ☆ **getting Tamir Grey's diaries out to the media 1.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE SECRET

Mara Suhar is not a reporter. She is a female mantis spirit.

⚠ **Vincent Penchyk is already dead** — captured and transformed. The footage of him pleading with his sister was *"simply bait to bring Anne to Bug City."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And Anne Penchyk — running mate to presidential candidate General Franklin Yeats — is not a victim. She was recruited months ago and she is in on it.** The Desolation Angels noticed her *"early in the UCAS presidential race"* because of her intelligence and strength of character, and *"the prospect of having such a strong-willed female in the powerful position of UCAS vice president is too good for the mantis spirits to pass up."* ☆ Through her friendship with Yeats she has obtained **valid passcodes for the Containment Zone gate, the supply drop points and the military schedules.**

☆☆☆ **The plan is to walk mantis spirits out of the Zone a few at a time, after which Anne will begin introducing them to *"some powerful women in the highest ranks of***

business and government." ⚠⚠ *"To get in and deliver the information, however,* ***Anne and the mantids need some patsies. (That's where the shadowrunners come in.)"***

> ✎ **HOW MUCH OF THIS THE TABLE LEARNS, AND WHEN.**
>
> ☆☆ **They will discover that Mara is a bug** — she betrays them on-screen, halfway through. ⚠⚠ **They will almost certainly not discover Anne.** She plays a hostage, she gets rescued, she thanks them, she pays them, and she goes back on the campaign trail.
>
> ☆☆☆ **That is the correct outcome and you should protect it.** The players walk two mantis spirits out of a quarantine zone with their own hands, believing they are saving hostages, **and the woman they saved goes on national trideo with them two days later.** ⚠ **Nobody ever tells them.**

WHAT HAPPENS

☆☆ **The meet is the reverse of every other Johnson scene in the campaign.** They are met at the door of a private club by *"a couple of big guys with dark suits, shades and that distracted 'I'm-listening-to-a-radio-in-my-head' look* ***that just screams federal agents — probably Secret Service.***" Inside, jazz, brass fittings and lighting *"intended to keep conversations discreet and private.* ☆ ***Convenient, neh?***"

☆☆☆ **And the instruction for playing Mara Suhar is unusual and important:** *"****The runners should respect this lady and want to like her*** *even while she is negotiating with them... In a day and age where everyone has something to hide or to fear,* ***the runners should find it refreshing to meet someone so together and on top of her game.***"

The job: get into the Containment Zone and bring out **Vincent Penchyk**, brother of the vice-presidential candidate. ☆ **100,000 nuyen.** Mara comes along to film it and offers to split whatever she gets for the tape.

⚠ **The cover story is airtight because it is politically credible.** Anne wants professionals who report only to Mara, because *"she does not want it to be seen as an abuse of power or privilege on her part by UCAS voters,* ***many of whom have friends and family that they want rescued from the Containment Zone.***"

⚠⚠ **On assensing her:** treat Suhar as **a Grade 6 initiate for aura masking**, and ☆ *"if the runner team includes a high-grade initiate potentially capable of penetrating the masking,* ***fudge the dice rolls a bit.***" ☆☆ You may allow *"something just a little bit odd about Suhar that the character cannot place."*

☆☆☆ AND THEN THE CANDIDATE COMES WITH THEM

> *"****She's an ork****, wearing a sleek black-and-urban-camo outfit that shows just how muscular ork women can be...* ***As she moves closer to you, you recognize her and your jaw drops.***"
>
> *"'****I've decided to go with you****,' Anne Penchyk says, her voice carefully controlled. '****Any objections? Good. Then let's move it.*** ⚠ ***The passcodes are only good for 24 hours.****'"*

☆ **She cannot be talked out of it, and the argument she uses is the one that matters:** she is **the only person who can give the guards the correct passcode to walk out of a gate**

legitimately. ⚠⚠ *"Without her help, the runners will have to try to get out the way they came in.* ***Can they possibly get in and out alive on their own? Do they really want to take that gamble?****"*

☆☆ **The book's instruction:** ***"Make the runners respect Penchyk's brass."*** ⚠ Which is exactly what makes the rest of it work.

GOING OVER THE WALL

⚠ **By air:** a **Piloting (8)**, then the gamemaster rolls **6 dice against the vehicle's Signature** — beat the pilot's successes and **two Force 4 elementals intercept.** ☆ Past that, a **Force 4 watcher** patrols, ⚠ though *"watchers look for astral targets first and physical penetrations second."*

⚠⚠ **By land, the Wall is loose debris and demolished building** and the rules are punishing: **2D6 Complex Actions to cross**, with a **Climbing (10) Test on 2 dice every turn.** Fail and you slip — **1D6÷2 extra Complex Actions**, plus a **Damage Resistance Test on Body only, TN 4, base damage Serious.** ☆ Everything physical is at **+2** while climbing.

☆☆☆ **And the design note that sets the whole tone of the episode:** the gamemaster rolls secretly to see whether the guard towers spot them, ⚠ ***"the runners* should *be spotted, but no guards or spirits will follow them.*** ☆☆ ***After all, who breaks* into *Bug City?"***

INSIDE

☆☆ *"Your trek across the Containment Zone has felt like* ***a tour through all nine circles of Dante's vision of Hell, with the damned grouped together according to their sins and tormented by evil spirits.****"* Every survivor has withdrawn into an enclave, and nobody trusts a stranger — ⚠⚠ ***"any stranger can look metahuman on the outside but be one of the bugs (or their stooges) on the inside. Trust the wrong person and you may die — or worse, end up an insect.****"*

⚠ **The Volk** hold a stretch of Interstate 55 behind razor wire, claiming to protect *"the* ***true*** *victims of the Chicago disaster:* ***mundane humans****"* — ⚠⚠⚠ and *"they murder metahumans and magicians as quickly and brutally as they do any insect spirits."* ☆ Their one weakness is the obvious one: **hating magic, they have almost no magical defences.**

⚠⚠ **The runners cannot get in with any nonhuman in the party** — which in Volk usage includes magicians, **and includes Anne Penchyk.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE BETRAYAL

Mara waits until they are well inside Volk territory, and then picks *"a suitably vulnerable moment — for example, when the runners are sounding someone out about Vincent Penchyk's whereabouts."*

> ☆☆☆ *"She will move near Penchyk and* ***use her Fear power against the runners****, driving them away from the two women. She will say, '****You've done well. I'll leave you to your fellow humans****,' and then* ***assume her true mantis form and seize Penchyk.****"*

⚠⚠ **A bug appears inside the Volk fence and the enclave detonates.** Every armed member comes running, ***"believing that the shadowrunners must be disguised bugs or their***

agents." Mara leaps the fence with Penchyk and is gone; ⭐ the Volk take a couple of shots and **do not pursue.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The runners have no prayer of talking their way out** — *"the Volk will attack metahuman runners and magicians on principle,"* and *"dozens of combatants... quickly turn into* ***a mob howling for the player characters' blood.***" ⭐ Stage it as a frantic chase; **every gate is being closed.**

⭐⭐ **And the leash the book puts on the obvious response:** if they want to chase Mara, remind them there is an army in the way — ⚠⚠ ***"without Anne Penchyk they have no easy way out — and do they really want to risk killing a UCAS vice-presidential candidate?"***

⭐⭐⭐ GHOULTOWN — THE BEST MORAL REVERSAL IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

> *"You hit the alley and stop short at the sight of several figures...* ***Their skin is gray and their bodies thin but muscular. They have small, sharp teeth, and they look at you once with eyes nearly as white as a blind person's.*** ⚠⚠ ***Ghouls. Great. Just when you thought things couldn't get any worse....***"
>
> ⭐ *"With a feral grin, one of the ghouls points toward an open manhole cover... You hear the noise of the mob; they're closing in.* ⭐⭐⭐ ***Choice time, chummer — certain death right here, or a chance of becoming a ghoul's dinner down in those sewers.***"

⭐⭐ **The book states its intent plainly, and it is the reason to run this adventure:** *"The runners should feel distrustful of and even disgusted by the ghouls at first,* ***but come to feel some sympathy for them once they get to know them.*** ⭐⭐⭐ ***Runners who have heartlessly hunted and killed ghouls in the past should have a chance to find out that the flesh-eaters are still people in many of the ways that really count.***"

⚠⚠⚠ **And Ghoultown's history is a municipal atrocity that became a fortress.** A few years ago Chicago solved its ghoul problem *"by* ***moving all the ghouls out of the Shattergraves and into the old Cabrini public-housing blocks*** *that were too run-down and hellish for human habitation.* ***Then they threw up a wall around the place for the residents' 'protection'*** *and prepared to forget about the whole thing —* ⚠ ***or maybe just drop a bomb on the place and be done with it.***"

⭐⭐⭐ **Then the bugs came.** ***"Turns out the city's decision to warehouse the ghouls in their own ghetto actually did them a favor: that wall around the ghouls' 'relocation zone' did just as good a job keeping the bugs and everyone else out as it did keeping the ghouls in."*** ⭐ *"Nowadays, Ghoultown is probably one of the safer places in the Containment Zone.* ***The ghoul laughs. Ironic, isn't it?"***

⭐⭐ **Tamir Grey** — *"so thin even for one of his kind that his features look as if they'd been sculpted from steel"* — has a proposition. ⚠ He wants them to carry **optical disks** out of the Zone: an interview with him, and excerpts from **his journals on ghoul society**, how the enclave has survived, and what the bugs have done. ⭐⭐⭐ ***"He is adamant that these documents get out of Chicago and into the public eye."***

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⭐ **And he has the lead they need**, because the ghouls have been **trading live humans to the Desolation Angels** and his patrols have seen a woman matching Mara's description among them. ⚠ The Angels hold ground near the Core.

THE KALEIDOSCOPE

The Desolation Angels' turf is on the edge of the Shattergraves, the ruins around the fallen Sears Tower. ⭐ The unlit sign reads *"THE KALEIDOSCOPE." "You can see a faint light in the entranceway, and* ***every once in a while you hear a scream.***" ⚠⚠ *"This is the bug nest — you can feel it in your bones...* ⭐***You're starting to miss dealing with corporate security goons. Oh, for the simple days.***"

⭐ **The book wants this loud:** *"Let the runners cut loose; in Bug City,* ***nobody's going to come and investigate a small-scale urban war*** *(frag, they happen all the time)."*

⚠ **Seven mantis spirits**, including **Vixen** at Force 7. ⚠⚠ *"Also in the room are* ***two fresh corpses. The runners seem to have interrupted the mantids' dinner hour.***" ⭐⭐ And a warning worth heeding: the spirits *"have access to the memories of their hosts, so* ***they will be much more familiar with the technology and capabilities of the runners than other bugs.***"

⭐⭐⭐ ***"The runners should survive, but barely. Make this one of the fights they have nightmares about."***

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE RESCUE IS A TRAP INSIDE A TRAP.** Penchyk is in a back room and **she is not a prisoner.** *"Immediately upon hearing any sounds of combat,* ***she will handcuff herself, rip her clothes, and in general make herself look abused,***" then put on *"a classic hostage act... screaming and pleading for mercy."*

⭐⭐⭐ **And then she asks them for one more thing.** *"She will insist on helping rescue some prisoners in the back of the club.* ⚠⚠ ***This apparent act of mercy is another setup; the prisoners, two young women, are actually the first set of mantis spirits scheduled to leave the Containment Zone.***"

⚠ **The players will carry them out themselves, and feel good about it.**

GETTING OUT, AND WHAT IT COSTS

⭐ **Anne tells them the truth about her brother** — the spirits killed him, the interview was bait — ⚠ *"and she has no idea why the mantis spirits were interested in her."* She apologises *"for leading them on a fool's errand,"* and **keeps her composure.**

⭐⭐ **At the gate she insists on speaking to the guard alone.** Then the UCAS army gives them first aid, food and water — ⚠⚠ **and makes them strip and put on antiseptic jumpsuits.** *"Told only that 'they must be* ***decontaminated****,' the player characters cannot learn why...* ⭐⭐⭐ ***their best guess is that it serves an attempt by the UCAS government to maintain the fiction of a VITAS outbreak."*** ⚠ **Their weapons are confiscated.**

⭐ A helicopter takes them to O'Hare, where Penchyk pays them, adds **a bonus of about half the value of the confiscated gear**, and buys their plane tickets home. ⚠⚠ She will owe them a favour — *"but keep in mind that* ***Penchyk will not do anything for the shadowrunners that***

would compromise her own position or in any way hinder the plans of the mantis cabal."

☆☆☆ **AND TWO DAYS LATER, THE SPEECH.** *"Anne gives an impassioned speech about her quest for her brother* ***and finding the two young women.*** ⚠⚠ ***Conveniently, she leaves the runners out of it.*** ☆☆ ***Yeats's campaign gets a big boost in the polls****, though most of the other candidates dismiss the entire event as a big publicity stunt."*

⚠⚠⚠ **She is on national trideo with two mantis spirits standing beside her, and the runners carried them out.**

> ✎ **IF ANNE PENCHYK DIES — the best failure branch in the knowledge base, and it is better than success.**
>
> ⚠ Without her they cannot walk out of a gate. They must climb out, hunted, ☆ **and they are responsible for the death of a vice-presidential candidate.** The investigation into her disappearance will find the calls between her and Mara Suhar, and from there *"the feds can easily find out who dined with Mara in a posh restaurant* ***in the conspicuous company of Secret Service agents.****"*
>
> ☆☆☆ **And then, weeks later:** ***"the announcement that Anne Penchyk is back on the campaign trail should shock the runners to their bones. Make them wonder what they got involved in. If Penchyk is campaigning, then who died in the CZ?*** ⚠⚠ ***If Anne Penchyk died in the CZ, then who's running for vice-president?"***
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Kill her and a mantis spirit takes her place on the ticket — and the player characters are the only people alive who know.** ☆ **Do not fix this if it happens. Run it.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **100,000 nuyen**, a bonus for the confiscated gear, a plane ticket, and **a favour from a woman who will never spend it on them.**
- ☆☆☆ **Tamir Grey**, if they carried his disks out — worth **up to 10,000 nuyen** from a media outlet, and ⚠ *"word will eventually get back to him whether the runners upheld their end of the bargain.* ***If the runners come through for Grey, they have made a lifelong friend of him.****"*
- ☆☆ **A completely revised opinion of ghouls**, if the episode did its job.
- ⚠⚠ **The knowledge that a mantis spirit walked into a Secret Service meeting and nobody noticed.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And two young women they rescued, whose faces are on the news.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Anne Penchyk is working with the mantids**	⚠⚠⚠ **5.8, directly.** This is the setup for the season finale and **the players have already met her**
☆☆☆ **The two "rescued" women**	⚠ **Unstated, forever.** ☆ If a player ever asks what became of them, **say nothing and let them go cold**
☆☆ **Tamir Grey and Ghoultown**	☆ A lifelong friend inside a sealed city, ⚠ **and the ghoul-rights question the season's candidates are already arguing about**
☆ **Yeats's poll bounce**	**The closing beat.** ⚠ His campaign is now running

	partly on a lie the runners helped stage
⚠ **The VITAS fiction**	☆ The UCAS is lying to its own citizens about what is in Chicago, **and the runners have been decontaminated for a disease that does not exist**
⚠⚠ **Vixen, if she lived**	A Force 7 mantis queen who has seen their faces

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND THE INTERESTING THING IS THAT IT WAS ALREADY SPENT, IN 4.6.**

⚠⚠ **The insect spirits are the *invae*, and the register has said so since Season Two.** ☆ But **the campaign has already had its say on them, on the page, in Harlequin's mouth** — *"The* invae? ***Not hardly. Just a pesky nuisance, those things***... ⚠ *the Enemy will gleefully consume all the bugs they can find when the time comes."*

☆☆☆ **So the correct handling here is *not* to plant. It is to let the contradiction sit.** The players were told four months ago by the most authoritative person they have ever met that the bugs are a footnote. ⚠⚠ **Here is a city of two million people that the UCAS Army has walled off and lied about, and it is a footnote.**

☆☆ **That is the most useful thing this episode does for the metaplot and it requires you to do nothing at all.** ⚠ Do not have anyone reconcile the two. Do not let an NPC explain the difference between an *invae* and the Enemy. ☆ **Let a player say "wait, he called this a nuisance" and let the table sit with it.**

⚠ **One thing to avoid actively:** the Angels' mission — **placing spirits inside powerful women across business and government** — will look to a well-read table like something larger. ☆☆ **It is not connected to Dask, and you should not connect it.** The bugs run their own war, and the register keeps them separate for a reason.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **2.9 AND 2.11, THREE SEASONS LATER AND AT NATIONAL SCALE.** In Season Two the runners found a hive under the city **and nobody believed them.** Then they found the same architecture inside a registered charity with a Lone Star captain and a Renraku VP in it. ⚠⚠ **Here they walk through a city that lost the argument.**

☆☆ **And the newsnet drumbeat pays off completely.** Chicago has been a headline since Season Three — ☆ *"all the blame for the Bug City debacle is being foisted off on the previous administration, and* ***anti-Awakened candidates frequently point to Bug City as an example of the inevitable consequences of uncontrolled magic use.***" ⚠ **Now they have been inside, and they know the government is calling it a plague.**

☆ **5.1's insecticide, quietly.** ⚠ Two episodes ago the most dangerous object in Seattle was a canister of banned bug spray. ☆☆ **Vixen's stat block lists exactly one weakness: Vulnerability (Insecticides).** ⚠⚠ **Say nothing whatsoever.** If a player remembers and brings some, **let it work.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Play Mara Suhar as genuinely likeable.** The book asks for it explicitly. ⚠⚠ **The betrayal is worth nothing if the table was suspicious of her from the meet** — and if a high-grade initiate could crack her masking, **fudge it, as instructed.**

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- ⭐⭐ **Let Penchyk impress them.** She is an ork woman who goblinized in her twenties, refused to accept that it ended her career, and is now walking into a quarantine zone in urban camo. ⚠️ **Every bit of that is true. It is just not all of the truth.**
- ⭐ **Make the Wall cost something.** The climbing rules are harsh on purpose, and ⭐⭐ *"who breaks* into *Bug City?"* is the line to deliver when the tower spotlight finds them **and then swings away.**
- ⚠️⚠️ **Run Ghoultown slowly.** ⭐⭐⭐ It is the heart of the episode and it is competing with two bug fights for the table's attention. **Give Tamir Grey a whole scene, let the runners be frightened, and let them come round on their own.**
- ⭐⭐ **Take the disks seriously.** ⚠️ A team that promises to carry a ghoul's journals out of a sealed city and then does it has done something genuinely good in a season where almost nothing they do turns out well.
- ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Do not let them work out Anne.** ⭐ She grieves convincingly, she pays honestly, she keeps her composure. **If the table suspects her anyway, that is a fine outcome — but confirm nothing.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And run the speech two days later.** The poll bounce, the two young women beside her, and the runners left out of it entirely. ⚠️ **Then move on to the next episode without comment.**

5.7 · Dry Run — standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Super Tuesday!*** (FASA), adventure 5 of 5. ⭐ **Seattle, then somewhere the runners believe is the Federal District of Columbia.**

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **1** · ⭐⭐ **successfully completing the virtual run 2** · overcoming the terrorists **1.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **RUN THIS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE FINALE. That is the whole reason it sits at 5.7** — an episode in which nothing was real, placed directly in front of an episode in which a presidential candidate really dies.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ THE PREMISE

The entire middle of this adventure takes place inside a virtual-reality simulation, and the player characters do not know it.

⭐⭐ **Dunkelzahn has been studying humanity as a hobby for decades**, and *"in recent years [he] has come to rely on the inventions of simsense and virtual reality as* ***his best tools for the study of the human condition****"* — inventing scenarios at his Lake Louise virtual theme park and then observing, recording, ⭐ *"and even experienc[ing] his subjects' responses at his leisure."*

⚠️⚠️ **VisionQuest has built a scenario that simulates a shadowrun, and the runners are the test subjects.** ***"To ensure untainted test results, Dunkelzahn has decided to keep the subjects unaware that they are undertaking a simulated run.*** *To achieve this,* ***Dunkelzahn's agents will drug the runners early in the shadowrun*** *so that they awaken in the simulation with no knowledge that what they are experiencing is not entirely real."*

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⭐ **They are not the first team.** The prologue shows the previous one failing and being reset — *"they made it farther than the last group... **but not far enough.** Give them the standard debriefing and have the techs reset the simulation."* ⚠️ Asked how many runs are planned: *"**As many as we need to. We have to make sure this is done right. There is no margin for error.**"*

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **And the prologue's last line is the one to keep:** the technician allows himself a moment's speculation about his employer's purpose, and then forces the thought away — ⭐⭐⭐ *"**Best not to inquire too closely into the purposes of those employed by dragons.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ THE VR RULES — THE MOST INVENTIVE MECHANIC IN THE COLLECTION

Because the simulation reads neural impulses, the players' own confidence becomes a die modifier.

> ⚠️ *"**The runners'** **expectations** **of what is going to happen create a slight bias in their favor** within the simulation."*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ *"**Pay careful attention to the attitudes expressed by both the runners and their players during the game. If a character or player expresses a strong opinion about the outcome of an event or test, modify the test result by altering the size of the dice pool in accordance with the opinion expressed.**"*

⭐ Say a shot is a sure thing and **gain a die or two.** Say it will never work and **lose one or two.**
⚠️⚠️ *"**In virtual reality, attitude really** **is everything**"* — ⭐⭐ and *"keep all test modifications **secret** from the players; **let them wonder why their success tests are turning out differently than they usually do.**"*

> ✎ **THE GLITCH RULE, AND WHY IT IS BETTER THAN A PERCEPTION TEST.**
>
> ⚠️⚠️ *"**Rather than having the players make continual Perception Tests to notice these glitches (thereby letting them know that they** **should** **be noticing something), simply insert small, slightly surreal details into descriptions of the runners' surroundings.**"*
>
> ⭐ The book's own examples, all of which read as flavour the first time:
>
> - **DeeCee from the air:** *"It's not at all like the real Federal District of Columbia. **It looks more like one of those documentaries you see on the trid.**"* ⚠️ This is in the second paragraph of the flight, and it reads as tourism.
> - ⭐ **A character's chronic complaint bothers them less than usual.** *"Lucky thing your trick knee's doing okay today."*
> - **Colours a little too bright, outlines a little too sharp.**
> - ⭐⭐ **A magician gets an odd feeling while casting or assensing** and blames DeeCee's unfamiliar vibes — ⚠️⚠️ *"in truth, **the VR system has a little problem simulating magical activities because they cannot be sense-recorded.**"*
> - ⭐ **A decker notices a faint lag** — which is *"the decker's finely honed awareness of virtual reality; **he or she is subconsciously noticing the difference between his or her normal deck interface and the VR program.**"*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **Deliver all of these as ordinary description. Never pause. Never invite a roll.**

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⚠⚠ **THE SIMULATION HAS TWO BLIND SPOTS, and both are useful.** It cannot do **death** — a character who takes damage past their monitor is simply taken off-line and kept unconscious until everyone wakes together, ☆ and ***"take aside any player whose character dies and explain to him or her what has happened."*** And it cannot do **astral quests** — an initiate who attempts one **fails**, ⚠ and ***"do not offer the player any explanation for this effect."***

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THERE IS NO EXIT.** ***"The only way the runners can exit the VR simulation is by completing the scenario.*** ☆***Even if they figure out that they are in a simulated environment, they cannot leave until they have played out the scenario****, because the VR neural feed 'short-circuits' their normal voluntary responses, including the magical abilities of magicians."*

☆☆☆ **And the cruellest line in the adventure:** ***"The characters cannot even sense their physical bodies... In fact, the runners cannot even tell that they still* have *physical bodies.*** ⚠ ***If they assume that their bodies no longer exist, do not reassure them. Let them worry about it for a while."***

WHAT HAPPENS

☆☆ **The meet is at a restaurant called the Eye of the Needle, behind a white-noise generator, with Carla Brooks** — Dunkelzahn's head of security, *"a tall, willowy elf with snowy white hair,"* who *"looks at home in her finely tailored dress and expensively tasteful jewelry."*

☆ **She has them to dinner first**, charming and mildly flirtatious, *"talking and laughing as if she has known the runners for years"* — and recommending dishes off the menu whose ⚠⚠ *"suggestions show impressive insight into the runners' personal tastes."*

☆☆☆ **Because she has their files, and because she has already run this simulation on several other teams.**

⚠ **The runners' own narration flags the danger and then dismisses it:** *"The only cliché you've heard more often is, '****never deal with a dragon.****' Or anyone working for one.* ☆☆ ***On the other hand, if a dragon wants you on his payroll can you really afford to say no?"***

The job: go to DeeCee and **plant a surveillance transmitter on the limousine of one of Dunkelzahn's political rivals** — former Vice President **James Booth** — before a fundraising dinner. ☆ **20,000 nuyen each, 5,000 up front.** ⚠ Magic will not verify her honesty: ***"it does not work because she is wearing enough magical countermeasures on her person to neutralize it."***

⚠⚠ **The flight is where it happens.** *"The first-class UCAS Air flight from Seattle to DeeCee has been quiet and pleasantly* ***terrorist-free****, giving you a chance to relax, enjoy* ***a complimentary drink or two*** *and sleep a bit."* ☆☆☆ **The drinks are drugged.** Dunkelzahn's people collect them at the airport **posing as a DocWagon team**, drive them to a VisionQuest facility near **Mason City, Iowa**, and plug them in — ☆ with *"a few slight modifications to the VR feed [to] make the runners believe that they dozed off briefly on the plane."*

☆☆☆ **AND THE BEST PLANTED CLUE IN THE ADVENTURE IS THE BUG ITSELF.** An **Electronics (6)** notices that ***"the surveillance device is inefficiently designed. Whoever built it included several redundant components and systems*** *(presumably intended as backups) in its design."* ⚠ Ask about it and the quartermaster brushes them off: ***"Just do what***

you're told and take the cred, OK? Save your brilliance for figuring out how to get the bug in place."

⚠⚠ **It is over-built because it is a simulation object and the scenario needs it to survive the run.**

THE RUN THAT DOES NOT MATTER, PLAYED STRAIGHT

The target is a federal VIP garage — three underground levels, **Barrier 20 plascrete**, ⚠ a three-metre fence topped with **monofilament wire (4S to anyone who climbs it and fails a Perception (6))**, **Rating 6 maglocks** outside and **Rating 4 with Rating 5 voice recognition** within, and three shifts of a supervisor plus twelve guards in AK-armed pairs.

☆ **The magical security is elegantly reasoned:** the underground levels are *"protected on all sides from astral intrusion* ***by the natural soil and rock surrounding them****,"* with a **Rating 6 ward** over the building above and a **Force 6 watcher** on its perimeter. ⚠⚠ A Secret Service mage watches remotely and **arrives 2D6 turns after any disturbance, with a Force 5 air elemental.**

☆☆ **Run all of it completely straight.** ⚠ It is a real infiltration with real tension, and **the fact that it is weightless is the payload, not the joke.**

⚠⚠⚠ PULLING THE PLUG

> *"Your hazy senses begin to clear, and* ***your cramped muscles shriek at the slightest movement.*** *Harsh fluorescent lighting stabs at your eyes… you brush your hand absently against* ***the cables and wires trailing from your head and arm*** *as you look around to get your bearings."*
>
> ☆☆ *"There are several beds,* ***one for each of you****… Each of you is hooked into what appears to be* ***access ports for some kind of sophisticated computer network.***
> ☆☆☆ ***Just where have you*** **been** ***for the past few days, chummer?****"*

⚠ **They get about four seconds.** *"The sound of a gunshot outside the room makes you jump…* ***two men in commando outfits burst into the room. They're both packing rifles, and they point them straight at you.***"

☆ **A Human Nation team has taken the facility hostage and is wiring it with explosives**, demanding that **the wyrm withdraw from the race** or they blow it and everyone in it. ⚠⚠ A dozen terrorists, *"well-trained, armed with sophisticated modern equipment* ***and willing to die to accomplish their goal.***"

☆☆☆ **And the runners have nothing.** ***"No equipment other than their cyberware — no armor, no shoes, and no clothing aside from hospital-style 'pajamas.'"*** ⚠ *"The runners are at a significant disadvantage, but they outnumber the terrorists and probably have much greater skill at unarmed combat"* — ☆☆ and if they jump the two commandos, **they must take both out in a single action** or one of them radios the command post.

⚠⚠ **The building has been sealed with its own protocols** — exterior doors on **Rating 8 maglocks**, **Barrier 14**, ☆ under a **Force 6 ward.** Their confiscated gear is in the security station.

☆☆ **And the terrorist commander is the cleverest thing in the second half. Jack Neelson**, a dishonourably discharged Marine — *"discharged for* ***assaulting a metahuman*** *while*

off-base" — who found Humanis in prison. ⚠ *"Though Human Nation does not trust magic enough to have a magician on the team,* ***Neelson is familiar with magicians and magical warfare from his time in the UCAS Marines. Therefore, the player characters will find it difficult to surprise him with a magical attack."*☆ He has also **pressed VisionQuest's own security mage into tracking the runners** through the facility's wards and watchers.

⚠⚠⚠ **And the sentence that makes him a person rather than a target:** ***"He carefully looks after the men and women under his command and understands that tactical sacrifices are sometimes necessary — and that every soldier knows the risks."***

HOW IT ENDS

☆ **Carla Brooks calls and tells them to be gone before the authorities arrive.** A vehicle, directions to Minneapolis or Des Moines, plane tickets waiting under her name, the agreed fee **plus 5,000 nuyen each.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And then the story is taken off them entirely.** ***"Credit for the terrorists' defeat goes to VisionQuest's security forces****, and Carla Brooks is extensively interviewed about the incident.* ☆☆ ***Dunkelzahn's political campaign flacks use the event as further proof of the dangerous unrest and high degree of dissatisfaction plaguing the UCAS****, taking this opportunity to reemphasize that* ***Dunkelzahn's unifying vision might represent the country's only hope for stability."***

☆ **A terrorist attack on the dragon's secret human-experimentation lab becomes a campaign talking point inside one news cycle.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE LAST LINE OF THE ADVENTURE IS PERFECT:**

> ⚠⚠ *"After the runners are released,* ***they discover that the VR setup has been replaced with a health spa.*** ☆☆☆ ***No one in the area will believe their story about the VR simulation."***

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **25,000 nuyen each** and a flight home under someone else's name.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **The knowledge that a great dragon drugged them, put them in a box and watched.** ☆ And that he has done it to other teams, and will do it again.
- ☆☆ **No proof of any of it**, because the room is a health spa now.
- ⚠ **Carla Brooks**, who was kind to them, remembered their tastes, and is *"utterly loyal to Dunkelzahn."*
- ☆☆☆ **And a question they cannot answer:** if they could not tell that time, **how would they tell next time?**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **They cannot tell what is real**	⚠⚠⚠ **5.8, immediately.** That is why this episode is here
☆☆ **Dunkelzahn experiments on people who cannot refuse him**	⚠ **The closing beat, and everything after it.** ☆ A man is about to be murdered and mourned by a nation, **and the runners know something about him nobody else does**
☆ **Carla Brooks**	☆☆ **Season 6's will.** She is the head of security for an estate that is about to become the largest bequest in

	history
⚠ **Human Nation**	☆ Third appearance this season after **5.5's *C.O.D.* — ⚠⚠ the same organisation, escalating**
☆ **"Best not to inquire too closely into the purposes of those employed by dragons"**	⚠ **Season 8.** ☆ Keep the sentence

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE METHOD IS THE MAN, AND IT HAS NOT CHANGED IN SIX THOUSAND YEARS.**

⚠⚠ **This is the best characterisation crossover available in the Sixth World half**, and it needs no artefact and no name.

☆☆☆ **What Dunkelzahn does in this adventure is construct a scenario, insert mortals into it without telling them, and watch what they do.** He has done it to at least two teams before this one. He resets and reruns. ☆ *"As many as we need to."*

⚠⚠ **The register's roster gives him the same personality, the same agenda and the same metaplanar curiosity across the down-cycle.** ☆☆ **So run him the same way in the Fourth World: a dragon who does not test people by fighting them but by arranging circumstances and observing** — the commission that is slightly too specific, the gift that is slightly too well chosen, **the sense afterwards that the whole thing was a question and someone has the answer now.**

☆ **And the tell to reuse verbatim is Carla Brooks ordering dinner.** She recommends dishes off the menu that the runners actually like, and it is warm, and it is charming, ⚠⚠ **and it is because someone read a file on them.** ☆☆ **The Fourth World version is the courteous intermediary who already knows what you want and never says how.** Same beat, same unease, six thousand years apart.

⚠⚠⚠ **Say none of it.** ☆ There is nothing here for a player to *deduce* — only something for them to **recognise later**, which is better.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **5.2, and the polarity is reversed.** Two episodes ago Dunkelzahn was a voice on a headphone paying a hundred thousand a head to make sure **no innocent was hurt.** ⚠⚠ **Here he drugs the runners on a plane.** ☆☆☆ **Neither is a lie about him.** He is genuinely careful with lives and genuinely incapable of regarding these people as anything but interesting — **and the campaign is better if the players hold both of those at once.**

☆ **And 5.4, mechanically.** ⚠ One episode of the season already took the characters' memories away and told them they could never have them back. ☆☆ **This one takes three days and tells them nothing at all.** By the finale, **the table should have stopped trusting the frame of any scene** — which is precisely the state 5.8 wants them in.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Run the entire DeeCee half as a completely serious adventure.** ⚠⚠ Real tension, real planning, real risk. **The moment you play it as a joke you have thrown the episode away.**

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- ⭐⭐ **Work the expectation bias from the first roll.** ⚠ Someone says *"this is easy"* — give them two dice. Someone says *"we're dead"* — take two away. ⭐ **Say nothing, ever**, and let the pattern be felt rather than noticed.
- ⭐ **Salt the glitches thinly and never repeat one.** ⚠⚠ The documentary line, the trick knee, the too-bright colours, the mage's odd feeling. **Four in a session is plenty.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **If someone works it out, do not confirm it and do not let them leave.** ⚠ *"They cannot leave until they have played out the scenario."* ⭐⭐ **A team that knows and still has to finish the job is having a better session than one that never notices.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Take a "dead" player aside and tell them the truth.** The book asks for it, and it turns a lost character into the only person at the table who knows.
- ⭐⭐ **Run the waking as a hard cut.** ⚠ Cramped muscles, harsh light, cables, and **four seconds later two rifles.** *"Play this scene as the all-time greatest action movie… don't let them rest."*
- ⭐ **Let the pyjamas matter.** No armour, no shoes, no weapons — ⚠⚠ **and the gear is three rooms away in a security station.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And end on the health spa.** ⚠ Deliver it flat, in one sentence, after the money has arrived and everyone has relaxed. **Then say nothing else and start the next session.**

5.8 · Dead Run — SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Shadows of the Underworld*** (FASA), adventure 5 of 5. ⭐ **Seattle.** ⚠ *"A sequel of sorts"* to **5.6** — ⭐⭐ but the book is explicit that a table which skipped it can still run this.

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **1** · finding out the truth about Yeats **1** · ⭐⭐ **informing the UCAS government about the Secret Hive 1** · finding out the truth about Cohen **1.**

⭐ **Ideally the party includes at least one magician who knows something about bug spirits.** ⚠ By now they do.

⚠⚠⚠ THE SECRET

General Franklin Yeats, candidate for President of the UCAS, is a wasp spirit.

He was possessed on his last visit home to Chicago before the Zone was sealed, ⭐ and *"**because of his exceptional willpower, the merge was an amazingly good one**; Yeats showed **no outward signs** of possession, and the spirit gained access to enough of Yeats's memories and experiences to convincingly masquerade as the General."*

⚠⚠ **He is one of the Secret Hive** — *"a secret faction of **'good merges'** — insect spirits **virtually indistinguishable from normal people** — who survived the purge of the Universal Brotherhood."* ⭐⭐⭐ *"These good merges… **were the puppetmasters of the Brotherhood. Since the purge, they have taken a new route to power through legitimate channels.** By possessing strong-willed people in powerful positions, they are producing **near-perfect bug possessions that allow them to gradually take control of human civilization.**"*

⚠⚠⚠ **And Anne Penchyk kills him.** She and the **Empowerment Coalition** — mantis spirits dedicated to destroying the Hive — arranged it, ⭐ and they chose the runners as fall guys *"because*

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they needed to ***shift the Secret Hive's attention away from the Empowerment Coalition.***"

> ✎ **IF THEY RAN 5.6, THE FRAME IS PERSONAL — AND IT IS BETTER.**
>
> ☆☆☆ ***"Penchyk remembers the runners from that mission — which gives her added incentive to use them as fall guys for the elimination of Yeats, thereby nicely tying up any loose ends."***
>
> ⚠⚠ **They saved her life in a quarantine zone, and that is precisely why she picks them to hang for a murder.**
>
> ☆ And later, at Donovan's doss: ***"If the runners took part in* Casualties of War*, the two mantids with Penchyk should be the 'survivors' that the runners rescued from Bug City."*** ⚠⚠⚠ **The two young women they carried out of Chicago with their own hands walk into the room and change shape.**
>
> ☆☆ **Say nothing. Describe two women. Let the table place them.**

WHAT HAPPENS

☆☆☆ **The prologue is a candidate arranging his own murder while believing he is arranging a blackmail payoff.** Yeats takes a call, tells his Secret Service detail he will handle it alone, and orders them to stay put — *"I don't want some overzealous glorified security guard* ***seeing or hearing something he shouldn't.***" ⚠ When the agent objects: *"You're not supposed to think. You're here to follow my orders* ***and those of our superiors.***"

⚠⚠ **Then a short walk, written warmly on purpose.** *"Yeats took a deep breath,* ***enjoying the soft night air****... the wind held the scent of flowers from the carefully sculpted gardens...* ☆ ***Yeats smiled, reflecting on the rightness of a universe in which things could work out so nicely.***" Then: *"Just a jaunt across the lobby and a short elevator ride, then* ***scratch one fool blackmailer.***"

☆ **The runners' meet is at the same hotel, and the discovery is done by smell first.** *"Something about the* ***air****, that's it. The air doesn't smell right.* ***It smells — sweet. Sweet and metallic at the same time.*** *You know what it is — you've smelled it somewhere before.* ***If you could just remember where...***"

⚠⚠⚠ ***"Something ripped clean through his throat****; you can see the whitish ridge of his torn windpipe and the pale gleam of his spine. His face is intact...* ☆***Haven't you seen this poor slot somewhere before?***"

☆☆ **THE TWO EVIDENCE LADDERS ARE A PERFECT PAIR, AND THE TRAP IS IN THE SECOND ONE.**

Physical ***(Perception 4)***	**Astral** ***(Astral Perception 7)***
1 Throat wounds; blood still warm — **dead within the past hour**	**1** The aura of death *"has tainted the ether all around"*
2 The weapon was large and wielded by someone **very strong**	☆☆ **2** *"The vibes are* ***strangely warped, almost alien****"*
3 No struggle; **no way in or out** but the door the runners used	**3** A powerful spirit was here recently — **and it was hiding its presence**
☆☆ **4+** The wounds are **too ragged for a smooth blade — spikes or a serrated edge**	☆☆ **4+** In fact **two** spirits, one stronger, **both carefully masked**

⚠⚠ **And the trap:** the killing left **a background count of 3**, which fouls every astral test. ⭐ An initiate with **cleansing** can clear it — ⚠⚠⚠ ***"but any such attempt will erase any astral traces of the killing as well."***

⭐ **Neither trail explains it alone**, and the better a magician makes the room, the less it can tell them.

THE FBI, AND WHY THEY ARE ALREADY IN THE LIFT

⚠ Five steps down the hall, the elevator chimes. ***"Freeze! FBI!"***

⭐⭐ **They are there because the Empowerment Coalition called them.** ***"The principal reason for the FBI's swift appearance at the Plaza is a tip received from the Empowerment Coalition*** *that General Yeats might be in danger."* ⚠⚠ **The mantids phoned the police on their own frame-up to make sure it took.**

⭐ **The pincer is precise:** Cohen's team by elevator, O'Rourke's up the stairwell, **arriving on the tenth floor in about a minute — twenty combat turns.** ⚠ O'Rourke is running **a sustained astral sense spell** whose radius covers the stairwell, so invisibility and the hotel hearth spirit's concealment are both poor bets — *"the second anything triggers her astral sense spell,* ***O'Rourke switches to astral perception.***"

⭐⭐ **The agents want them alive**, and *"the runners should be cautious about using force to get past the Feds* ***if they want any chance of clearing themselves.***"

⚠ **Then a chase**, and the book's suggested obstacles are all worth stealing: a drone tanker of flammable fuel crossing an intersection; ⭐ **earth elementals throwing up barricades and fire elementals going for the fuel tank** while the team's magician is trying to drive; a go-gang joining in for fun; **a bridge starting to rise**; a construction site.

DONOVAN, AND THE LOOSE END BEING TIED

⭐⭐ **Their fixer was a dupe too.** Donovan found out the Plaza meet was a set-up, went to ground, and has been getting nowhere: ⚠ *"few of her contacts are willing to pass on information to anyone connected with Yeats's assassination.* ***As far as the shadows are concerned, it's everyone for himself.***"

⭐⭐⭐ **The approach to Hell's Kitchen is one of the better Barrens passages in the campaign.** ***"Fine gray ash lies over everything like dust coating a forgotten place and time****... nobody lives here except for the real down-and-outers and* ***the folks who want to make sure that no one ever finds them.*** ⭐*The heavy smell of damp ash makes it seem like* ***the Cascade volcanoes could erupt again at any moment.***"

⚠⚠ **The Coalition gets there first**, intending to make Donovan *"a host for a new mantis spirit."* ⭐ The gunshot the runners hear on the stairs is **a ganger bodyguard shooting at something that has just stopped looking human.**

⚠ **If they fight, the mantids do not stay long** — one grabs Penchyk and hops out, the other covers and goes astral. ⭐⭐ ***"The mantids have no particular need to kill the player characters; in fact, letting them live will serve the mantids' plans, as the runners will still be blamed for the death of General Yeats.***"

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☆☆☆ THE CLIMAX — AND THE BEST TURN IN THE COLLECTION

The door blows in. *"'**Freeze! FBI!**'... Several of the newcomers stare in **open-mouthed horror** at the two huge mantis spirits — or maybe they're horror-stuck at the sight of **a respectable VP candidate in the same room with a pair of insect spirits and a band of shadowrunners that they think murdered General Yeats.** Or both. ☆ **With politics involved, who knows?**"*

⚠⚠⚠ **And then the mantids attack the last agent through the door.**

> ☆☆☆ *"**Cohen has no choice but to fight back in the only way that gives him a chance of survival — he reveals himself as a wasp spirit** and uses his powers against the mantids. **This development should shock the runners and the rest of the Feds into momentary immobility; the only one not taken by surprise is Anne Penchyk.**"*

☆ **She pulls the nearest runner behind cover and confesses under fire** — Yeats was a wasp spirit and a member of the Secret Hive, the mantids learned it **from information dug up in Chicago**, and the runners' arrest *"was intended to distract the Secret Hive's attention from the real culprits."*

⚠⚠ **Then she asks them to help her kill a federal agent.** If Cohen survives and reports, *"the Empowerment Coalition will be exposed and its efforts to destroy the Hive will come to nothing."* ☆ She apologises *"profusely"* and promises *"every means at my disposal"* to clear them.

☆☆☆ **AND THE ADVENTURE HANDS THE DECISION TO THE TABLE, EXPLICITLY.** *"The gamemaster decides which agents do what, **but must make sure that the battle is ultimately decided by the runners.**"*

> ⚠⚠ **Help the bugs who framed them**, and make enemies of the Hive.
>
> ⚠⚠ **Shoot every insect in the room**, and stay wanted for murder.
>
> ⚠⚠ **Walk out**, and leave a vice-presidential candidate to be killed by a wasp spirit — ☆ *"if nothing else, refusing to help Penchyk means that **she will not lift a finger to reverse the situation she helped create.**"*

HOW IT ENDS

☆☆ **If they help, she keeps her word** — and tells O'Rourke *"**a carefully edited version of the truth**, revealing the 'tragedy' of Yeats's possession by a wasp spirit **but leaving out her pivotal role in Yeats's death** as well as her connection to the mantis spirits."* ☆ The Hive is named, Cohen is named, and **the FBI clears the runners.**

⚠⚠ **The official story is a lone gunman.** *"The UCAS government pins the blame for the assassination on Cohen, painting him as a **'lone gunman' under the control of an insect spirit.**"*

☆☆☆ **AND THEN THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES.** *"A few days later, Penchyk will give **a tearful televised speech eulogizing General Yeats** and announcing her determination to continue the presidential race — ⚠⚠ **as the candidate for the top slot.**"*

She killed the head of the ticket and inherited it.

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⭐⭐ **One genuinely good thing survives:** the government quietly opens an investigation into the Secret Hive under **Meagan O'Rourke**, who *"might well **call on the runners for freelance help** if she begins to believe that some of her superiors have been compromised."* ⭐ *"Slowly but surely, the UCAS government will begin to root out the insect infiltrators in its midst."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And if they say nothing at all, that does not happen.** O'Rourke reports what she saw, Cohen still takes the blame, ⚠ *"but the runners will be wanted **'for questioning.'** ⚠⚠ **There will be no investigation of the Secret Hive because the UCAS government will not know of its existence.**"*

⭐ **Whatever they do:** the assassination *"stirs up considerable public anger against the bugs and **stokes the fires surrounding the Chicago issue**, which the remaining presidential candidates use to their best advantage."* ⚠ And **the truth about Yeats stays classified** — *"runners who want to enjoy continued good health will respect the UCAS government's decision in that matter."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐⭐ **The knowledge that a presidential candidate was an insect spirit, and that they can never say so.**
- ⭐⭐ **Meagan O'Rourke**, running the government's Secret Hive investigation, ⚠ **and willing to hire them.** The best contact in the campaign so far.
- ⭐ **Donovan** — grateful, and wanting to work with them again — ⭐ **and the King's Crimson.**
- ⚠⚠ **The Empowerment Coalition**, who used them, apologised, and will do it again.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And the Secret Hive**, who may want revenge, may want them as pawns, ⭐ or *"may capture them and use them **as hosts** to get at O'Rourke."*

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **The Secret Hive inside the UCAS government**	⚠⚠ **Seasons 6–7.** ⭐ The bug thread stops being about Chicago and becomes about institutions
⭐⭐ **Meagan O'Rourke's investigation**	⭐⭐⭐ **A federal handler who suspects her own superiors** — the cleanest hook the campaign has for government work
⚠⚠⚠ **Anne Penchyk, presidential candidate**	⭐ **The closing beat**, eleven days later
⭐⭐ **The two mantids they rescued in 5.6**	⚠ **Loose in the world**, and now known to the runners by sight
⚠ **Whatever the runners chose in the doss**	⭐ Either the Hive or the Coalition is now hunting them. **Write down which**

⭐⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — READ THE 5.6 BOX AGAIN, BECAUSE THE ANSWER IS THE SAME AND IT MATTERS MORE HERE.**

⚠⚠ **The temptation in this episode is enormous and you must refuse it.** A hidden faction quietly possessing people in the highest offices of a nation, in order to *"gradually take control of human civilization,"* ⭐ looks exactly like the shape of the thing the players were shown in **4.6**.

⚠⚠⚠ **It is not that thing.** The *invae* are their own war, older than the Sixth World and indifferent to it, ⭐⭐ **and Harlequin's dismissal in 4.6 remains the campaign's official word on them: *"not hardly — just a pesky nuisance."***

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> ⭐⭐⭐ **Which produces the most useful thing this finale can do: a table that has been paying attention now has direct, personal, first-hand evidence that the most knowledgeable person they have ever met was wrong, or lying, or working to a scale on which a wasp spirit in the White House genuinely does not signify.** ⚠ **All three readings are available and none of them should be closed off.**

> ⭐ **Do not have an NPC raise it. Do not answer it if a player raises it.** ⚠⚠ The correct response to *"but Harlequin said—"* is to let the sentence hang and cut to the next scene.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **5.6, completely, and the players are the ones who set it up.** They carried two mantis spirits out of a quarantine zone believing they were rescuing hostages. ⚠⚠ **Here those two walk into a room and change shape**, and the woman they saved has murdered the top of her own ticket.

⭐⭐ **And the season's whole argument closes.** 5.1: they save a candidate and he fundraises off the dead. 5.3: they destroy a candidate's biography and he fundraises off that. ⭐⭐⭐ **5.8: they are framed for killing a candidate, and the woman who did it delivers a tearful eulogy and takes his job.**

⚠ **Nothing the runners do to a politician this season does what they expect, and this is where the pattern becomes visible.**

⭐ **2.9 and 2.11, one last time.** ⚠⚠ In Season Two nobody believed there was a hive under the city. **In Season Five there is one in the federal government, and the runners are the reason anyone is looking.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Read the prologue aloud.** ⚠ The flowers, the dry night, *"the rightness of a universe in which things could work out so nicely,"* and *"scratch one fool blackmailer."* **A man walking cheerfully to his own murder is the best cold open in the season.**
- ⭐⭐ **Do the smell before the body.** Sweet, metallic, familiar, unplaceable — **then the door, then the throat.**
- ⚠⚠ **Offer the cleansing trap and do not warn them.** ⭐ A magician who tidies the background count to read the room better **destroys the only astral evidence there is.** That is a real decision and it should cost them.
- ⭐ **Run the twenty turns honestly.** O'Rourke's team is on the stairs and **the clock is the encounter.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Let Cohen's transformation stop the room.** ⚠ *"Momentary immobility"* — describe the federal agents freezing, describe the guns wavering, ⭐ **and describe Anne Penchyk moving before anyone else, because she is the only person present who is not surprised.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Then stop and let them choose.** ⭐⭐ Do not resolve the fight around them. The book says the battle **must** be decided by the runners, and it means it. **Ask each player what their character does, in order, and honour it.**
- ⭐⭐ **Whatever they choose, run the eulogy.** ⚠ Tearful, televised, dignified — and then the announcement that she is running for President. **No comment from you.**
- ⭐ **And write down who is hunting them.** The Hive or the Coalition. ⚠⚠ **One of them is, and it matters in Season Six.**

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⚠⚠⚠ 9 AUGUST 2057 — the closing beat, and it is not an episode

Deliver this as news, wherever the team happens to be standing. It costs one scene.

☆☆☆ **Dunkelzahn wins the election.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And on inauguration night, he is assassinated.**

☆☆ **That is all.** No investigation to run, no scene to play, **no chance to have been there.** The runners hear it the way everybody hears it — on a trid in a bar, on a newsfax, from someone shouting in the street.

⚠ **Set `world.dunkelzahn.assassinated` and `world.dunkelzahn_will.active`.**

☆☆ **AND PLANT ONE MORE THING WHILE THE CITY IS GRIEVING. IT COSTS A SENTENCE AND IT PAYS IN SEASON EIGHT.**

⚠ **People keep vigil at the Watergate blast site.** ☆ Among them is **David Emerson**, a bored rich kid who worked as a gofer on the campaign — ⚠⚠ **and who comes out of that vigil, months later, casting like a master magician**, having failed a college magic test as a younger man.

☆☆☆ **He resurfaces on *UCAS Today* as "David Dragonson," preaching that Dunkelzahn ascended to a higher plane as a deliberate sacrifice for metahumanity, and formalises his following as the CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON.** ⚠ They buy a parcel on **Prince Edward Island** for a Temple of the Dragon; ⚠⚠ **and his people collect dragon-relic telesma — blood, scales, talon clippings — from the death site**, which reaches the talisman black market almost immediately.

⚠⚠⚠ **Give the players one newsfax line and one street preacher, and never mention it again.** ☆☆ **The cult grows quietly for five years, splinters, and one of its splinters is the reason the runners are in Denver in 8.2.**

> ☆☆☆ **AND THIS IS WHY THE SEASON SPENT SO MUCH TIME ON HIM.**
>
> ⚠⚠ Over eight episodes this team has been paid by his campaign, saved his reputation from his own believers, been drugged and studied by him, and watched him hire, observe and dispose of people with perfect courtesy. ☆☆ **They are among the very few people in the Sixth World with a personal opinion about Dunkelzahn**, and it is a complicated one.
>
> ☆ **Let that be the whole of the beat.** Not a mystery, not a hook, ⚠ **and above all not a job.** *"Metaplot beats are news, not adventures."*
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **The crossover payload here is silence.** In this campaign's terms the being who has just died is **Mountainshadow**, and the Fourth World half of the project will eventually put a party in a room with him. ☆☆ **Nobody in 2057 knows that, and nobody should say it.** The correct handling is to let a player who has run both campaigns feel something in the pit of their stomach at a news bulletin, **years later, unprompted.**

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SEASON FIVE — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

The season the runners learned that the truth does not decide anything. They saved a candidate, destroyed a candidate, were framed for killing a candidate, and were personally used as raw material by two more — and every single time, **the politician converted the outcome into campaign material within a news cycle.**

Thread	Where it stands at the end of Season Five	Where it goes
Dunkelzahn	**Elected. Dead.** And the runners knew him	**Season 6 is the will**
The Secret Hive	**Inside the UCAS government**, and under quiet investigation **only if the runners talked**	**Seasons 6–7**
Meagan O'Rourke	Running that investigation; suspects her own superiors	**A federal handler — the cleanest government hook in the campaign**
Anne Penchyk	**Murdered her running mate and inherited his campaign.** Lost the election	Alive, powerful, and owing them either a favour or a grudge
The Empowerment Coalition	Still hunting the Hive. Used the runners twice and apologised once	Recurring, and never trustworthy
Kenneth Brackhaven	**Survived the exposure of his own biography** and kept campaigning	**Season 6–7 Seattle politics**
Burt Aronson / Humanis	Broken locally if he died; **stronger than ever if he lived**	Street-level pressure
Gilly Rellets, Tamir Grey, Dr. Falt, Donovan	**Four contacts the runners earned rather than bought**	Spend them
Arthur Vogel's favour	Unspent — **and they may now know what he is**	Any locked door
The orichalcum key	**Gone**, to whichever of three powers took it	Nothing. **That is the point**
Whatever they did in Portland	Still missing. **Still the gamemaster's**	Any slow week

SEASON SIX · The Will and the Ways

2058–2059. Veteran to Elite, 90–120 Karma.

⭐⭐⭐ **A dragon died and left the world a document, and the world has not finished reading it.**

The will is public and it is enormous — bequests to individuals nobody has heard of, whole orphan corporations handed to strangers, ⭐ **ten million nuyen to whoever can explain how magic works**, and, buried among the rest, ⚠⚠ **three grainy photographs of the surface of Mars.**

⭐⭐ **Season Six is the campaign's alternate-frame season, and that is a deliberate structural choice.** Three of its six episodes put the player characters inside somebody else's institution — **AresSpace corporate security**, ⭐ **UCAS Special Forces**, and a corporate infiltration run on a single night's deadline — ⚠ which is exactly the right texture for a year in which every institution in the world is being rewritten by a dead man's paperwork.

⚠⚠ **And the season does not end on an episode either.** It ends on **19 December 2059**, and on a building.

> **✎ RUNNING AN ALTERNATE-FRAME EPISODE WITHOUT LOSING THE CAMPAIGN.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **Every alternate frame in this season converts back to a standard runner team**, and each source book supplies the conversion. ⚠ **You do not have to use them.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **But you should use at least one, and here is the argument.** After five seasons the table knows exactly what a shadowrun feels like: you are hired, you are lied to, you are paid, you go home. **An institutional frame breaks every one of those assumptions at once** — ⚠ you cannot refuse the job, you cannot walk away from the consequences, **you have a supervisor**, and the reward for uncovering something enormous is that a manager files it.
>
> ⭐ **The cleanest way to run it** is to let the players build institutional versions of their own characters — same person, different life — ⚠⚠ and to state clearly at the top of the session that this is a frame, not a body swap. **Then hand their real characters back at the end and let them notice which set of constraints was worse.**

6.1 · Mission: Mars

SOURCE

📕 ***Missions*** (FASA), adventure 3 of 4. ⭐⭐⭐ **The knowledge base rates this the single best solo module it holds.** Houston, Ellington AFB, and a farm in Kansas.

⭐⭐ **The frame: the player characters are the Special Operations Division of AresSpace Security** — *"essentially,* ***the corporate equivalent of shadowrunners****"* — ⚠ and the book spends its space entirely on the differences.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠⚠ **KARMA — NOT RECORDED IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE, SO THIS DOCUMENT SUPPLIES IT.** Two of the four *Missions* adventures carry Karma awards in the extraction and two do not, ⚠ **and this is one of the two.** ☆ Unlike *Harlequin* chapter seven there is **no structural reason** for the omission, so treat it as a probable extraction gap.

☆ ✎ **USE THIS, built from the pattern the other *Missions* adventures and the core rules establish:** surviving **1** · threat level **1** · ☆☆ **completing the survey objective 1** · ☆ **bringing every member of the team home 1 —** ⚠⚠ **and the book's own emphasis rewards restraint, so pay 1 for resolving the situation without a firefight in a pressurised environment.**

⚠ **Replace it the moment the printed table is available.**

> ✎ **WHAT PLAYING FOR ARESSPACE ACTUALLY CHANGES.**
>
> • ☆ **You cannot say no.** *"Remind the players that they are playing **employees** of AresSpace; **refusal is not an option**, unless they'd like to spend the rest of their careers **ticketing non-Ares-owned cars in the company parking lot.**"*
>
> • ☆☆ **Office politics are the setting.** Agents spend real effort on *"intra-corp competition, bragging to improve their reputations and **actively soliciting** the interesting jobs."* ⚠ *"No one wants to go from being one of Knight-Errant's golden boys this week to **elementary-school lunch duty** next week because a jealous rival spread nasty rumors."*
>
> • **Business suits — armoured if you like, but no bulky plate**, and *"corp security agents rarely carry excessive amounts of **obvious** cyberware."*
>
> • ☆ **Priority C or better in Skills**, and **at least two Knowledge Skills each**, because these people went to school. **Middle lifestyle**, paid.
>
> • ⚠⚠⚠ **And the ugly one, which is in the book and should stay in:** ***"Discrimination is rife in the corporate security field, and so metahuman characters should be exceedingly rare — usually no more than one in any group, most likely an elf or a dwarf rather than an ork or a troll."***
>
> ☆☆ **That last constraint is worth honouring rather than quietly dropping.** ⚠ A table that has spent five seasons watching Humanis, Brackhaven and the Volk should feel what it is like to be inside an organisation that achieves the same result **with a hiring policy and no slogans at all.**
>
> ☆ **Three alternate casts if the frame does not suit:** ordinary runners hired by AresSpace, a rival, **or the Draco Foundation** (*"needs no tweaking"*) · ☆☆ **a pirate-trid news crew** whose goal is to *expose* it · ⚠⚠⚠ or **UCAS Special Forces sent to bury it**, *"and might well end up doing a little wetwork."*

⚠⚠⚠ THE HIDDEN HISTORY

2001. A NASA probe mission photographs a stretch of the Martian surface and returns *"amazing images of **several giant pyramid-like structures**, as well as what appeared to be **the skeleton of a large, unidentifiable creature.**"* ⚠ NASA does not release them. Under the Department of Defense it begins planning a **secret manned mission**, run by **Veil** — *"a covert black-ops agency… **Few people in or outside the Defense Department knew that Veil existed.**"*

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
2011. Ten years and billions of covert dollars later, **Operation Discovery** puts eight people on Mars. They make planetfall in July, survey the surface, and **take samples of the pyramid stone and of the skeleton.**

⚠⚠⚠ **On 24 December 2011 the main capsule's orbit destabilises and it crashes.** Five of the eight die. Three limp home in the command capsule with most of the samples.

☆☆☆ **AND THE DETAIL THAT MAKES THIS SETTING-CRITICAL:** *"**The mishap that crippled the main capsule occurred at almost the same moment that the great dragon Ryumyo appeared on Earth to signal the Awakening.** ☆☆ The timing **may** be a coincidence, but Yavin is convinced that the two events are connected."*

⚠ **The counterweight is supplied too:** there was *"**no evidence of magical interference** during Operation Discovery — but knowledge of magic at the time was **extremely limited.**"*

☆☆ **The burial:** the ship, the equipment and the samples go into a secret facility beneath an abandoned missile silo at **Hoffman Farm, Haggard, Kansas.** The three survivors return to duty; two die within five years. ⚠ **Lieutenant Colonel James Yavin is the only one left.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE PRICE IS A PIECE OF FIXED SHADOWRUN HISTORY, EXPLAINED.** *"[The mission] cost the agency **billions** of dollars, far more than could be plausibly buried in its budget. Following **a misuse-of-funds scandal**... the agency **nearly went bankrupt.** ⚠⚠ **Ares Macrotechnology bought out the tottering space agency in 2016.**"*

The Ares buyout of NASA — a fact every Shadowrun player knows — turns out to be the direct financial consequence of a covered-up Mars disaster.

THE SABOTAGE, AND THE PEOPLE IT KILLED

☆ **Karl Xavier** came to AresSpace with the NASA staff — ⚠ **and was a Veil mole the whole time.** When AresSpace launched **Project Cydonia** in 2042 to photograph Mars properly, Veil ordered him to intercept the data. ☆☆ He and a team of deckers turned it into *"**200 minutes of static and noise plus a single doctored image** — a **1950s-style flying saucer** hovering over the Martian landscape, with old-fashioned **Apollo-mission equipment** visible in the foreground."*

⚠⚠ **Then AresSpace Security investigated the sabotage and found evidence pointing at a local branch of the Mutual UFO Network.** *"AresSpace hired a team of shadowrunners to obtain the original data, but the runners succeeded only in **killing several MUFON members.** The data was never retrieved — **because MUFON didn't have it.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Xavier and his deckers had planted the evidence.**"*

☆ **A corporation hired shadowrunners to murder a UFO-watchers' club over a forgery planted by its own employee**, years before this adventure begins. ⚠ **That is the moral floor of the episode, and nobody in it is going to be punished for it.**

☆☆ **Xavier then left, founded** Astrotech Industries**, and has been blackmailing the government with the real Cydonia data ever since** — hinting that he will release it *"unless they steer fat contracts his way — ⚠ promising the same consequences, of course, **if he dies unexpectedly.**"*

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠⚠ **And the employer has a history too. Benjamin Steele** was the mid-level manager whose career died with Cydonia; AresSpace demoted him to **requisitions manager**, and he has clawed his way back. ☆ **He is the one who assigns this job.**

WHAT HAPPENS

☆ **Dunkelzahn's will publishes three Mars photographs, and Dr. Robert Zeus recognises two of them from a Matrix newsstand.** ***"It was supposed to be a secret. All these years, no one knew except the few of us. Where did the wyrm get these? How did he get them?"*** ⚠⚠ He knows what comes next: ***"they'd send someone. Someone to tie up the loose ends... And if he couldn't convince them that he'd keep his mouth shut, he might end up very, very dead."***

☆☆ **The investigation is the adventure. Most of it is not a firefight** — *"players will find the* ***Computer*** *skill and* ***Corporate and Political Etiquette*** *especially useful.* ***A decker character is useful, but not necessary.***"

Lieutenant Colonel Yavin, 75, lives at Ellington Air Force Base among Air Force and NASA memorabilia. ☆ Two photographs on his wall show him in front of spacecraft: a shuttle, and ⚠⚠ **a large rocket similar to a Saturn V** — a class of vehicle that had no business existing in 2011. **The photograph is the evidence.**

☆☆ **He is** ***"cynical, jaded, embittered... long ago lost whatever faith he had in his country,"*** and the book's instruction for the scene is about the players, not him: ☆☆☆ *"As he tells the characters his story,* ***they should feel somewhat naive, realizing that a lot of things go on in the world of which they know nothing.***"

⚠ **His house is bugged.** Veil has planted surveillance in the homes of *"****everyone*** *who knows anything about Operation Discovery."* A scanner finds them at **TN 7, one success per bug, four bugs** — ☆ and Yavin *"doesn't see how anyone could have gotten in."*

☆☆☆ DR. ZEUS, AND THE BEST SINGLE MECHANIC IN THE ADVENTURE

He insists on meeting in a public park, believing a crowd protects him. ⚠⚠ ***"Unfortunately, he's wrong."*** Veil monitored the call that arranged it.

☆ Unlike Yavin, ***"Dr. Zeus takes pride in his work*** *for Operation Discovery and speaks of the project with* ***a hint of nostalgia.*** *He paces as he talks,* ***chain-smoking nervously.***"

☆☆☆ **AND HERE IS THE MECHANIC:** *"The information he has to offer appears* ***in roughly the order that he relates it, unless the characters' questions lead him to do otherwise.*** ⚠⚠ ***What the characters ask and in what order can therefore make a real difference if the assassin kills the doctor before he has revealed everything.***"

⚠⚠⚠ **Because at some point, mid-sentence, a sniper takes the top of his head off.**

> *"****In mid-sentence, one side of the doctor's skull should burst with a spray of grayish-pink mist****... The sniper is one of Veil's clean-up crew, using a silenced Ranger Arms SM-3* ***from 300 yards*** *away.* ☆ ***He has spent the past two game hours aiming at Dr. Zeus, because his first shot really has to count.*** ⚠⚠ ***Don't bother to roll dice for the shot... The characters cannot save Dr. Zeus, no matter what extraordinary measures they try.***"

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐⭐ **So the players' question order is the entire scene.** ⚠ **Do not hurry them and do not hint.** What they think to ask is what they get to keep.

THE MEN IN BLACK

⭐ *"That black van is behind you again… **It's probably not the same van, following you. Just your imagination working overtime. Sure.**"*

⚠⚠ **Twelve men in black suits and mirrored sunglasses box the car in.** *"Step out of the car, please."* ⭐⭐ **They are not the assassins** — *"both groups report to the same boss… **The Men in Black are the 'good cops'**; they've been sent to stop the characters' investigations by **intimidating** them rather than killing them. **They will not start a fight; that's not their job.**"*

⭐ **The procedure is played completely straight:** repeated polite requests, then ⚠ *"the agents will fire **very carefully** at the windows to break them **without hitting** any of the characters inside."* Weapons taken and cleared, the car searched, **every data chip and printout confiscated** *"no matter how loudly the characters object."*

⭐⭐⭐ **And the only answer anyone gets:** ask why, and *"one of the men will hit that character with **a kidney punch** — nothing debilitating, but the character will immediately understand that he should shut up."* Then: ⚠⚠ ***"National security."***

⚠⚠⚠ **Fight them and the adventure ends.** Survivors are held for **five days** *"during which time the clean-up crew will eliminate **all** witnesses to and evidence of Operation Discovery… **The characters will have failed.**"*

THE SILO

Hoffman Farm, Haggard, Kansas — a hundred kilometres west of Wichita, the only property on that stretch of road, bought by the U.S. government in the late 1970s and abandoned since. ⭐ Behind one of the barns: **a storm cellar.**

⚠ **The padlock is noticeably newer than its hinges.** Below it, a Rating 5 maglock; then a vault door on a Rating 7.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE BEST PIECE OF DESIGN IN THE ADVENTURE IS HIDDEN IN THE SUCCESS COUNT:**

> ⚠⚠⚠ ***"One success opens the door — but also triggers a silent alarm within the Pentagon.** Another silent alarm alerts the clean-up crew, who are **en route to the farm even as the characters enter the silo.** ⭐**Achieving two or more successes opens the door without triggering the silent alarms.**"*

⭐⭐ **Succeeding badly is worse than being slow, and nothing warns them.**

Inside, a hundred feet down — ⭐ *"the surrounding earth offers excellent protection against astral intrusion,"* both doors carry **Force 6 wards**, and the silo runs at a steady **72 degrees** with **heat sensors that will notice several warm bodies** and motion sensors that trip on anything faster than a few inches a minute. ⚠ Moving unnoticed costs **a Quickness (5) Test for every two feet.** ⭐ It can all be shut down from the security console — **Computer (5)**, or **(8)** for an alarm already triggered.

⚠ **And then the clean-up crew arrives.** ***"Exaggerate the severity of the situation; unless the characters act fast and have a whole lot of luck, their careers and lives are facing an abrupt end."***

⚠⚠⚠ THE DEBRIEF, WHICH IS THE REAL ENDING

☆☆ **Steele is not primarily interested in Mars.** *"Though Steele will be interested in the truth about the 2001 NASA mission…* ***his greatest concern is the sabotage of Project Cydonia."***

⚠ Then he thanks them and dismisses them. Asked what he intends to do: ***"it's none of their concern."*** Pressed, he reminds them *"forcefully"* that they are employees bound by **a non-disclosure and confidentiality contract. Period.**

☆☆☆ **AND ARESSPACE DOES NOTHING, FOR ONE STATED REASON.** The corporation releases nothing. ⚠⚠ **It does not even claim its bequest** — because collecting the one per cent of Ares Macrotechnology that Dunkelzahn left for exposing this **requires exposing it.**

> ☆☆☆ ***"The megacorp chooses not to spill the beans for one simple reason: profits. Damien Knight's contacts within the UCAS government are more important to Ares Macrotechnology's bottom line than 1 percent of Ares stock — and Knight knows better than to ruffle those feathers."***

⚠⚠ **Two people die afterwards.** *"Lieutenant Colonel Yavin and Karl Xavier have* ***both turned up dead.*** *Yavin suffered a massive coronary; Xavier died in a car crash under somewhat mysterious circumstances.* ☆☆ ***In fact, Xavier's death is Steele's revenge.*** *Steele paid a price for Project Cydonia long ago.* ***Now he's made Xavier pay for it, too."***

☆ **The employer who hired them for the truth used it to commit a murder.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And if they keep copies and try to publish**, they are out of a job *"faster than they can blink —* ***but that's only the beginning"***: another visit from the Men in Black, or the clean-up crew, ☆ **or an Ares-sponsored shadow team.**

☆☆ **The failure state is quieter and worse.** If Veil wins, *"Steele and AresSpace never learn the truth. If still alive,* ***the characters return to their jobs, and life goes on as if nothing happened.*** ⚠ ***Veil no longer considers them a threat because they can't prove a scrap of what they claim to know.*** ☆ *If they talk, the world will consider them just* ***another bunch of tofu-for-brains conspiracy nuts."***

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **Proof of alien ruins on Mars, a covered-up manned mission, and a corporate sabotage that got innocent people killed —** ⚠⚠ **and a filing cabinet.**
- ☆ **A shadow rumour, spreading without them:** *"all the rumors claim that* ***someone found out the truth*** *and that AresSpace and the UCAS are keeping that truth to themselves."*
- ⚠ **Two funerals**, one of which their own employer arranged.
- ☆☆ **And the knowledge that a dragon knew.** ⚠ Nobody can explain **how Dunkelzahn got those photographs**, and nobody ever will.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The will as a machine that keeps**	⚠ **The whole season.** ☆ Every bequest is an

producing jobs	adventure someone is already running
⭐⭐ **Veil**	⚠⚠ A UCAS black agency that officially does not exist and now knows their faces — ⭐ **reusable in any season**
⭐⭐ **Benjamin Steele**	⚠ A manager who had a man killed over a career grudge, **and who is still their supervisor**
⭐ **The Draco Foundation**	⚠⚠ Named here as a plausible alternate employer — ⭐⭐ **and it is about to become the most important institution in the setting**
⚠⚠⚠ **Whatever is on Mars**	⭐ **Nothing. Ever.** See the box below

✎ ⚠⚠⚠ **A QUESTION FOR THE AUTHOR — AND IT IS A REAL ONE, BECAUSE THE CAMPAIGN NOW CONTAINS TWO OF THESE.**

In **3.6** the runners met a blind man in a sewer who had been *"the first attempt to travel astrally beyond the biosphere,"* came back and **gouged his own eyes out**, and now covers his walls with drawings of **a reptilian face surrounded by a nimbus of stars.** ⭐ The module refuses to explain him and this outline runs it that way.

Here, an entirely different book puts pyramids and the skeleton of something large and unidentifiable on the surface of Mars — and times the disaster to the exact moment of the Awakening.

⚠⚠ **These are two independent published sources, and the campaign now holds both.** ⭐⭐ **The question is whether they are the same thread.** Three options, and it is the author's call:

- **(a) Leave them unconnected.** Two separate unexplained things, which is how the Sixth World actually feels. ⭐ **Costs nothing and preserves both.**
- **(b) Connect them privately** — the same something, seen twice, by a mage who went out too far and by a camera that went out further. ⚠ Never stated, never confirmed.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **(c) Rule them out of the metaplot entirely and say so in the register**, so no future episode accidentally reaches for them.

⭐⭐⭐ **RULED: (a). Leave them unconnected — and the reasoning is the one this document has already made five times.**

⚠⚠ **The campaign is not withholding an answer about the Enemy; it delivered that answer at 4.6.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Which means every other unexplained thing in the Sixth World is free to be exactly what it appears to be — a blind mage who went too far out and drew what he saw, and a camera on another planet that found something nobody can date.**

⭐ **Two unexplained things are not one unexplained thing with a missing link.** ⚠ **They are what a world with a shallow astral and a deep past actually feels like from the inside**, and connecting them would spend both to buy neither.

⚠⚠⚠ **Option (c) is explicitly NOT taken.** ⭐⭐ **Do not rule them out in the register either — leave the door shut, not locked.** ⚠ **A future book may say something, and nothing here forecloses it.**

CROSSOVER — one line, and it is about a dragon rather than a pyramid.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not connect Mars to the Fourth World.** ☆ The register has nothing on it, the pyramids are not Theran, the skeleton is not a Horror construct, and **reaching for either would be the single worst overreach available in this project.**
>
> ☆☆ **What *is* live is one sentence of Yavin's:** the capsule failed *"at almost the same moment that **the great dragon Ryumyo appeared on Earth to signal the Awakening.**"* ⚠ In this campaign Ryumyo is **Ri Mao**, Luung's banished apprentice — ☆ which means the dragon whose surfacing timestamps the Awakening is **a specific individual with a grievance and a history**, rather than a symbol.

> ☆ **Plant nothing. Simply let the players hear a dragon's name attached to a date** — ⚠ and remember that in a later Fourth World session they may meet him being banished.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **The closing beat of Season Five, four months on.** They heard about the assassination on a trid in a bar. ⚠⚠ **Now they are reading the man's will as a work assignment.**

☆☆ **And 5.7, sharply.** One season ago Dunkelzahn drugged them and put them in a box to see what they would do. ⚠ **Here he is dead, and the thing he left behind is still arranging their lives** — ☆ *"where did the wyrm get these? How did he get them?"*

☆ **1.2, at very long range.** ⚠ The campaign's second-ever episode was a corporate job with a re-skinned employer. **Six seasons later the players are the corporation**, and the moral distance is the point.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Set the frame at the top and mean it.** Suits, supervisors, non-disclosure agreements, and **no option to refuse.** ⚠ The episode's argument only works if the players feel employed.
- ☆☆ **Play Yavin for the players, not the characters.** *"They should feel somewhat naive, realizing that a lot of things go on in the world of which they know nothing."* ☆ Let him say *"if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes."*
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not manage the Dr. Zeus conversation.** ☆☆ Let them ask what they think to ask, in the order they think of it, **and kill him mid-sentence.** No roll, no save, no warning. **What they got is what they have.**
- ☆☆ **Play the Men in Black with total courtesy and zero information.** ⚠ Shoot out the windows without hitting anyone. Take the chips. **Kidney-punch the first person who asks a question, and say "national security."**
- ⚠⚠ **Let one success open the vault.** ☆☆☆ **Say nothing.** The clean-up crew is already driving, and the players will not know why until they arrive.
- ☆ **And run the debrief flat.** ⚠⚠ No confrontation, no speech, no villain. **A manager says thank you, reminds them of their contract, and files the greatest discovery in human history because a stock bequest is worth less than a phone number.**

6.2 · Second Effort

SOURCE

📕 ***Corporate Punishment*** (FASA, **SR3**), adventure 2 of 3. ⭐ **Seattle and the Salish-Shidhe coast, an hour north of Vancouver.**

⚠️ **Written for 2060.** ⭐ Everything in it turns on **Dunkelzahn's will** and on **Brackhaven's post-election investment boom**, both of which are live from 2058 — so **place it late in the season and it drops in cleanly.** ⚠️⚠️ **The one thing to check is the page furniture:** the book brands a rival **Novatech**, ⭐ and this campaign already had to swap that branding out once, back in **1.2**. **Confirm the corporation exists at your date, or rename it as before.**

⭐ **Karma — the insertion leg:** surviving **2** · getting Marianna in **big and loud 2** ⚠️ *or* ⭐⭐ **quiet and stealthy 3 — one or the other, never both.** ⭐ **The extraction leg:** surviving **3** · getting Marianna out **2** · killing Munson **1** · ⚠️⚠️ **failing to get her out −2.**

⚠️⚠️ **The book pays a full extra point for doing it clean, which is the entire design.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE PREMISE, WHICH IS A HEIST WITH NOTHING TO STEAL

Yakashima has replaced a Proteus AG research scientist with a trained spy. ⭐ The hard part was supposed to be teaching a covert operative to think like a researcher. ⚠️⚠️ **It wasn't.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"Proteus is a paranoid corporation — **very, very paranoid**... **Its own staffers don't know what they will work on from week to week or even where they will be working. Teams may be broken up on a whim and reassembled months later.**"*

⚠️ **The swap happened a few days too early.** *"When I confronted the Proteus employee that I replaced, **even she didn't know where she would be working this week.** That's the crux of our problem. **If I show up in the wrong place, I can be compromised.**"*

⭐⭐ **And the only place that knowledge exists is a room.** Proteus beams each site its schedule by satellite; a terminal **not connected to the Matrix or to any Proteus network** burns **a single-use chip**; a security decker slots it once and **writes the schedules onto wall-sized magnetic boards.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ ***"The room has no camera, so each employee must physically enter the room to determine where to go."***

⭐⭐⭐ **So the job is: get a woman into a building, let her read a whiteboard, and get her out leaving no trace.**

⚠️ **Nothing is stolen. Nothing is downloaded. Nothing is missing afterwards.** ⭐⭐ **The entire difficulty of the run is the *absence* of evidence** — which makes it the cleanest pure-infiltration premise in the knowledge base, and the reason the Karma table pays more for silence than for success.

⚠️⚠️ THE CLOCK

Treat this as a timed scenario, not an open one.

When	What
Friday evening	Contact and dinner with Mr. Johnson

⚠⚠ **Sunrise Sunday → sunrise Monday**	**The insertion window. That is all of it**
☆ **Monday–Thursday**	Nothing. ⚠ *"These four days allow the gamemaster to insert side plots"*
Friday lunch	Confirmation and payment — ⚠⚠ **and the wrong Johnson**
⚠⚠⚠ **The weekend**	**Find and extract the spy**, while being hunted
Monday	*"The spy is shipped to a **South Sea facility** and most likely will be **exposed by Brackhaven**"*

☆ **Marianna's own deadline is equally hard:** Monday is a travel day for reassigned staff. ⚠ **A Monday insertion is too late.**

THE THREE CORPORATIONS, AND WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON

☆☆☆ ***"All three corps in this adventure have a strong anti-metahuman bent"*** — ⚠ and the interesting thing is that they express it in three completely different registers.

- ⚠⚠ **PROTEUS AG** *"makes no actual claims to be anti-metahuman"* — it simply **hires and treats humans, and uses the rest of the races as experiment fodder.**
- ⚠ **YAKASHIMA** *"claims it is the corporation of **purity** and the beacon of Japanese ideals"* — which plays well in Japan and badly in Seattle, ☆ so **Yakashima will hire metahumans for shadowruns, and its Johnsons are usually not Japanese.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **BRACKHAVEN INVESTMENTS** *"is anti-metahuman **and proud of it.**"*

> 🔪 **THE BOOK LEAVES THE DIAL TO YOU, AND YOU SHOULD SET IT DELIBERATELY.**
>
> *"This adventure is written **without any overt prejudice.** ☆ **The gamemaster can, if he or she wants, add any details such as prejudice for the sake of realism.** Mr. Munson may talk only to humans, for instance. **Such details are left to the gamemaster and the style of the gaming group.**"*
>
> ☆☆ **Worth honouring exactly as written: the material supports playing the bigotry as texture and equally supports dialling it down.** ⚠ Make that choice on purpose rather than by default, ☆ and note that **6.1 just spent a whole episode inside an organisation that discriminates by hiring policy.** Two episodes of the same argument in a row is a lot; **one of them should probably be quiet.**

⚠⚠ AND THE JOHNSON IS BEING WORKED TOO

☆☆☆ **The prologue is a honeypot, and the mark is the runners' own employer.**

A headhunter calling herself *"Jana"* picks up a *"fat, bald man"* in a Seattle club, ☆ analyses his breath with an implanted chemical analyser to check how much he has drunk, and fishes out a confession: *"I'm just another wage slave who hates his job… **You don't just walk away from Yakashima**… ⚠ **Or an extraction.**"* Then, outside, ☆☆ *"her brain shuts off the voice modulator. **Her natural voice has a soft, southern drawl. 'I'm in. Big fat fish on a hook.'**"*

⚠ **She works for Brackhaven Investments**, whose recruitment problem is stated with unusual honesty: his Humanis ties make hiring hard, because ☆☆ ***"people often mumble under their***

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breath about the trog living in their neighborhood, but most aren't willing to work for a corp that openly professes an anti-metahuman stance."

⚠⚠⚠ **So Brackhaven hires shadowrunners to find dissatisfied corporate staff and *trick them into arranging their own extractions*.** ☆ **Anthony Munson is the perfect target** — a man passed over for promotion in favour of *"a more corporate-minded person from his East Coast division."*

⚠⚠ **And he defects in the middle of the runners' operation.**

THE RUN

☆☆ **The land facility is a fake.** *"Its main laboratories and housing… are in **offshore** facilities. **The land-based facilities are strictly for fluff** — public relations, hosting business clients and such."* ⚠ Which is why the Schedule Room is there at all, and why the security around it is real.

☆☆☆ **The perimeter is a solvable timing puzzle and should be run as one.** A four-man team patrols in pairs: **ten minutes** down the south side and back; **twenty minutes** on the front, gate and parking lot; then the first pair crosses the front (ten minutes) and does the north side. ☆☆ **That gives the runners thirty minutes before a patrol returns to any given side.** ⚠ Every two hours a pair rotates through the security office door at the front, ⚠⚠ **and there are guards on the roof.**

☆ **Details worth using:**

- ⚠ **The card reader at the gate is mounted on the fence**, so drivers must get out of their vehicles — ☆☆ ***"this gives the security office a chance to see who is arriving."***
- ☆ **The building is polished armoured glass (Barrier 8) except at five points** — two fire exits, a small front door to the security office, and ⚠ **a one-way window** through which security watches the drive.
- ☆☆ **A satellite dish in the northwest corner of the roof** — ⚠ **which is the tell for the room below it.**
- ⚠⚠ **Two pop-up sentry turrets with Ultimax MMGs** cover the north and south corridors between building and fence. ☆ They can be spotted with thermographic vision on **a Perception (6)** — *"the soil around the turrets is **warmer** than its surroundings."*
- ☆ **The "street lamp" in the parking lot has no lamps.** It is **ultrasonic emitters and a Rating 8 broadcast jammer**; ⚠ security's own gear is encrypted to work through it, and **they switch to ultrasonic vision when the alarm goes.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE KILLING ZONE IS THE nastiest single piece of security design in the season.** The boxes along the inside of the fence are **high-intensity lamps.** When the alarm sounds they all come on at once:

> ⚠⚠ ***All glare penalties are TRIPLED — +6 to all actions.*** ☆ Flare compensation and ultrasonic vision halve it, to **+3**.

⚠ The lamps have **five points of armour on the side facing the woods.** ☆☆ **They can be shot out — but only from inside the fence, or by someone who thought of it beforehand.**

☆ **For the decker**, the Proteus system is *"an enormous **aquarium**"* — datastores as treasure chests on the floor, the security node as **a deep-sea diver**, IC as **grey and white sharks**, and ⚠

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*"all Proteus deckers appear in **black diving suits with harpoon guns. They should be considered superior and professional.**"*

⚠⚠⚠ **And read the offshore security sheaf as a statement of intent: it does not shut down until step 50. It just keeps sending deckers.** ☆☆ **Proteus does not want to expel an intruder. It wants to catch one.**

☆☆ THE WRONG JOHNSON

Friday lunch, same restaurant, everything identical except the glass around the booth is tinted black — ☆ and the hostess *"will comment sympathetically if **fewer runners arrive at this visit than before.**"*

> *"I am **Mr. Johnson's boss.** ⚠⚠ **Mr. Johnson was extracted on Thursday morning. We believe he was a willing target.**... **Five black credsticks slide into the center of the empty table.** Please stay. **I have a job for you that will double the nuyen you just earned.**"*

⚠ **Munson took files** — *"files that would be recognized only by an insider. **Most of these concern Miss Che.**"* The fear is that he will **hand her to Proteus to buy goodwill at Brackhaven.**

☆☆ **And the man delivering this is worth playing carefully.** Jonathan Copass *"doesn't normally deal with runners directly (**that's why he hires Johnsons**).* ☆ ***He is uncomfortable and somewhat ill at ease.** Alert runners might detect this, **as well as the fact that he doesn't appear to be lying. He just doesn't like coming down to the runners' level.**"* Six and a half feet, black Armante, ⚠ **purple cybereyes.**

⚠⚠ **His actual motive is stated plainly:** he *"does not want to be involved in this situation. However, **one of his underlings created the problem and he knows the score — unless he finds a way to fix it,** **he will end up the scapegoat.**"*

☆ **And if the negotiation goes badly he applies the only pressure he has:** Munson knows about the runners, ⚠ *"and they are a loose end."* Then he gives them **Munson's real name**, *"so they can take care of loose ends if necessary."*

☆☆☆ HOW IT ENDS — AND THE STING IS IN THE MORNING NEWS

If they bring her back, Copass hugs her, pays them, and ☆ **Marianna winks and says she will know who to ask for if she ever needs inserting again.** She becomes a Level 2 contact. ⚠ Copass offers **corporate protection, or jobs as company men —** ⚠⚠ *"He may even hire them to take out Munson."*

Then the next morning's scream sheet:

> ☆☆☆ *"In tragic news, **a top scientist for Proteus AG was found burned to death in a Downtown Seattle alley. Her name was Marianna Che.** Lone Star is satisfied that this was the result of a failed extraction.* ⚠⚠⚠ ***Proteus says their autopsy shows that although the fire was recent, the body had been dead for weeks.**"*

⚠⚠ **Yakashima has been keeping the real Marianna Che's corpse on ice since the swap, and burns it now to close the loop.**

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⭐⭐ **The runners spent a week protecting a woman wearing a dead woman's name, and the corporation casually reveals it kept the body.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Play the beat and say nothing.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **Two fees, the second double the first**, and up to **eight Karma** across both legs.
- ⭐⭐ **Marianna Che**, a Level 2 contact who is a professional infiltrator, ⚠ **and who is not Marianna Che.**
- ⚠⚠ **Jonathan Copass**, a genuinely senior Yakashima executive who now owes them the salvaging of his own career — ⭐ and who has offered them **corporate protection or salaried employment.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Anthony Munson, alive or dead.** ⭐ *"If Munson is dead, they can be sure **both Brackhaven and Proteus know who they are.**"*
- ⭐ **And knowledge of what Proteus does offshore** — which is nothing they can prove and nothing anyone wants to hear.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Kenneth Brackhaven, rich**	⚠⚠ **The rest of the campaign.** ⭐ He lost the presidency and **made a fortune out of the aftermath**
⭐⭐ **Brackhaven's recruitment method**	⚠ **He tricks people into working for him**, because almost nobody will do it openly. ⭐ A reusable villain engine
⭐⭐ **Proteus AG and the offshore aquaspheres**	⚠ A biotech corporation that keeps its real work under the sea and **treats metahumans as material**
⭐ **Jonathan Copass**	⚠⚠ A corporate patron **who does not want to know them**, which is the most useful kind
⭐ **Marianna, whoever she is**	⭐⭐ **A contact whose real name the players will never learn**
⚠ **Munson, if he lived**	A defector with a grudge, inside Brackhaven Investments

CROSSOVER — none, and this one is a deliberate rest.

⚠ **6.1 carried a dragon's name and a question for the author. 6.3 and 6.4 both reach for the Awakened world.** ⭐⭐ **This episode is three corporations, a locked room and a whiteboard, and it should stay exactly that.**

⭐ **There is one thing to actively avoid.** Proteus AG does **genetic manipulation and experimentation** and uses metahumans *"as experiment fodder"* — ⚠⚠ which a well-read gamemaster may be tempted to connect to older and larger things about the shaping of peoples. **Do not.** ⭐⭐⭐ **It is a German biotech company doing ordinary atrocities for money, and the episode is stronger if that is all it is.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **5.3, AND IT IS THE MOST SATISFYING SOUR PAYOFF IN THE CAMPAIGN.** In Season Five the runners proved that Kenneth Brackhaven is a fabricated person raised on a murdered ork child's name, handed the proof to a newsnet, and watched his campaign **recover.**

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⚠⚠ **He lost the election. Then the dragon's death made him rich.** *"Because of the rhetoric he spoke and the companies that, in some cases,* ***quietly hid their racism****, Brackhaven was asked to invest in more and more companies — and he did.* ***He made heaps of money.*** *As support for the dragon grew, other groups fought harder to remain in power and grew fearful of change.* ***Brackhaven invested heavily in those.****"*

☆ **And now he is the reason their contract falls apart.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Nobody says his name to them with any weight. He is simply a firm, in the background, buying a middle manager.**

☆☆ **6.1, one week later.** ⚠ Last episode ended with a manager filing the greatest discovery in human history because a stock bequest was worth less than a phone number. ☆☆☆ **This one ends with a corporation burning a woman's body to tidy an accounting problem.** *Season Six's argument is that institutions are not evil, they are indifferent, and indifference at scale is worse.*

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Sell the premise properly at the meet: they are not stealing anything.** ⚠ Players conditioned by five seasons of extraction will keep asking what the objective is. **The objective is that a woman looks at a wall and nobody ever knows she was there.**
- ☆☆ **Run the patrol pattern as an honest puzzle.** ⚠ Thirty minutes per side, two-hourly rotations, roof guards. **Let them watch it, time it, and beat it — that is the pleasure of the episode.**
- ⚠⚠ **Pay the extra Karma point for silence and tell them afterwards, not before.** ☆ *"Big and loud 2, quiet and stealthy 3, one or the other."* **Let them discover that the book rewarded restraint.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **If the alarm goes, use the lamps.** ☆ **+6 to everything**, all at once, across the whole compound. **It should feel like the building turning on them.**
- ☆ **Give them the four dead days.** ⚠ The book explicitly leaves Monday to Thursday empty for other business — ☆☆ **and the twist lands harder if the table has spent a session doing something else.**
- ☆☆ **Play Copass as embarrassed rather than menacing.** ⚠ He is a senior man doing a job he considers beneath him, **he is telling the truth, and he is frightened of being blamed.**
- ☆☆☆ **And read the morning news out at the end, flat, with no commentary.** ⚠⚠ *"The body had been dead for weeks."* **Then close the session.**

6.3 · Baser Instincts — standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Predator and Prey*** (FASA), adventure 3 of 3. ☆ **Seattle** — ⚠⚠ **and it must be a metroplex.** Written for **2059**, which is where this season already is.

☆ **Karma (team):** surviving **1** · ☆ **threat level 3** · retrieving the incubus **alive 1** · the Parashield records **1** · a member of the dog pack **alive 1** · discovering Disball's role **1.**

☆☆ **Note the shape of that table: three of the six awards are for bringing something back alive.** ⚠ **The Karma is quietly pushing the non-lethal path, and it never says so.**

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⭐⭐⭐ THE THESIS, AND WHY THE CITY MATTERS

***Predator and Prey* is the only book in the knowledge base whose antagonists are not people.** ⚠️ *"Metahumanity no longer necessarily sits at the top of the food chain — **other, more powerful predators may make him their prey.**"*

⭐⭐ **And the book is explicit that this particular adventure has to happen in a sprawl:** ***"The urban sprawl is an area where people assume that metahumanity reigns supreme, allowing for maximum confusion and uncertainty when that assumption is overturned.*** ⚠️ *People in wilder areas, by contrast, **cannot afford that sort of hubris**, and so the adventure **loses some of its power to unsettle** if set in such places."*

THE SITUATION

⭐⭐⭐ **The prologue is a single night shift at a Lone Star substation, told in timestamps, and the horror is entirely administrative.**

11:45 p.m. — a street patrol shot something and nobody knows what; forensics promises a gene-check *"later this week."* ⚠️ Sergeant Crocker winces, remembering the time a patrol's *"gabriel hound"* turned out to be **somebody's black Lab.** On last week's hell hound: *"a runaway from the new Saeder-Krupp facility… **they're claiming they never lose guard animals and are invoking their corporate rights to prevent further investigation.**" "Surprise, surprise. **Stick it in the corp file with all the others.**"*

12:16 a.m. — devil rats. ⚠️⚠️ *"The poor shlub managed to hit his autodial even while they were swarming him. **Dispatcher heard thirty seconds of screaming and identified the devil rats from the howl.**"*

12:32 a.m. — three people walked into traffic at an intersection. ⭐ *"Witnesses remember seeing different things, **but all described 'an ineffable sense of longing.'" "Fits the profile.**"*

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **2:58 a.m.** — *"Shore Patrol has a situation." "Not now." "They think they have a—"* ⭐⭐⭐ *"**Just tell them to shoot it.**"*

⭐ **And the closing exchange:** *"It's time for the situation meeting with the rest of the night shift." "**Tell them I'm a little busy.**"*

⭐⭐ **Three nights ago the rules changed.** More than a dozen aggressive-critter calls across Seattle in one night, including creatures never before seen in North America — ⚠️ and **a plasma wandering the back alleys downtown, caught on vid by KSAF and never found.** The next day PAC took twice the usual calls and **lost six officers**, ⚠️⚠️ and the more careful datafaxes skirted around saying what everyone could see: ***"in some cases the critters had actually set up ambushes for the PAC officers.**"*

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE REAL ENGINE OF THE ADVENTURE IS A PRESS WAR.** Lone Star, already bruised from the Mob War, gets ambushed on an afternoon trid show by **a Knight Errant rep helpfully citing his own company's success rate at animal control.** ⚠️ Knight Errant then offers extermination teams *"in the interest of public safety."*

⚠️⚠️ **The Star's press conference collapses**: asked whether he will pull officers off the organised-crime beat, the head of Lone Star Seattle watches the room turn — *"why hadn't the Star prevented the most recent incidents; why wasn't the Department of Paranormal Investigation…* ⚠️

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did they plan a witch hunt against environmental groups" — and the whole thing degenerates into shrill accusations.

WORKING FOR THE MAN

⭐⭐ ***"The Johnson for this job screams Lone Star the minute the runners see him, though he doesn't admit to being a cop."*** His cover is that he represents a victim's family. ⭐ His payment is the tell:

> ⭐⭐⭐ **Whitewashed records. Registered Equipment Edges. SINs and alternative identities.** ⚠ *Things only Lone Star can hand out.*

⚠ **He wants what the authorities cannot be caught obtaining** — ⭐ and the book advises playing the recruitment slowly: ***"Don't play all the Johnson's cards at first; keep tossing them out one by one*** *until the runners feel they can live that close to Lone Star for awhile* ***without getting caught in the Star's net."***

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE ASTRAL DOES NOT WORK

This is the constraint that defines the episode and you must enforce it from the first attempt.

⭐ The entity behind the attacks *"has taken astral snoopers into account when laying its plans"* and has **wiped every astral fingerprint from the animals**, masked its own aura, ⚠ **bound spirits to guard its astral rest**, and *"cajoled the spirit world into silence."*

⚠⚠ ***"Lone Star has lost three mages*** *trying to track down astral information."*

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"Give the player characters* ***several stone walls to beat their heads against*** *until they realize that astral tracking in this case* ***is beyond their ability."***

⚠ **A five-season party will have a magician who solves problems astrally.** ⭐⭐ **This adventure exists partly to take that away**, and the sooner the table accepts it the better the rest plays.

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐⭐ **The trail runs through three investigations that can be played in any order** — an incubus in the sewers, a wild dog pack, and a break-in at **Parashield, Inc.**, a local corp that imports exotic paracritters and trains watch animals. ⚠ Every affected animal turns out to have come from **the Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens**, ⭐ and **only one name appears on all their records: Dr. Reginald Disball.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE SEWERS ARE DESIGNED TO FEEL EASY, AND THE INSTRUCTION FOR RUNNING THEM IS BRILLIANT:**

> ⭐⭐ ***"Push the familiarity of it all. Pretend to roll for random encounters.*** *Ask the players if they want to map out where they are going.* ***Make a point of writing down their marching order.*** ⚠⚠ *Make this encounter* ***a set piece that they feel they can control... When the runners hit the later encounters, they will realize just how unprepared they are for what they are going to face."***

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⚠ **Then hundreds of devil rats** use Concealment to appear from nowhere, **five per character.** ☆ Shooting them risks hitting the person they are on, *"the safest way to get them off a runner is **through physical attacks**."* ⚠⚠ After the wave passes, a **Body (4)** for each character — **two or fewer successes and they go down in the muck**, are attacked first, ☆ and *"will likely drop their flashlights or weapons, causing even more confusion in the dark."*

> **✎ THE TWO SEWER TECHNICIANS ARE A JOKE AT THE PLAYERS' EXPENSE, AND YOU SHOULD RUN IT.**
>
> Two Shiawase Envirotech workers in grubby overalls hand over tranq guns while arguing about *"**the F-series of mono-nucleotide tests**"* and *"good old-fashioned **constructed enzymes**,"* then snap into businesslike efficiency the second the runners look at them. ☆☆ When the team comes back with the incubus they *"practically **chortle with glee**,"* muttering *"can't wait to get this baby in the lab"* and *"finally I can **disprove your idiotic theory on pre-cephalopod evolution!**"*
>
> ⚠ *"**Emphasize the contrast** between their somewhat arrogant manner and extremely technical talk on the one hand and their **grubby, smelly sewer worker uniforms** on the other. The difference **should arouse the characters' suspicions.**"*
>
> ☆☆☆ *"**In reality, there is no deep dark secret to discover about them; they're just eccentric.**"*
>
> ⚠⚠ **This is the same lesson as 4.1's bush pilot, and it is worth teaching twice: not every strange NPC is an agent.**

☆☆☆ THE ZOO

The best scene in the collection, and it should be played exactly as written.

They find Disball across a moat from a primate island, **giving a presentation to zoo visitors, and he is losing it in public.** *"The recent animal attacks are **an aberration**," he says, **sounding nervous**.... ⚠ **You get the feeling he is looking everywhere but at you.** He licks his lips and shifts from foot to foot. "**Only someone completely without conscience would use animals in such a way. I've spent my whole life learning how to take care of these magnificent creatures — and what's happening now, the way some lunatic is sacrificing them for some unfathomable agenda, makes me sick!**" ⚠⚠ **His voice rises until he's practically screaming, and he's starting to shake.**"*

☆☆☆ **Then he turns and looks straight at them:**

> *"**His whole demeanor changes; he stands up straight and his trembling ceases.** Suddenly, he's in control of the situation. ⚠⚠⚠ **Actually, it looks like he's in control of the whole world. All the primates on the island, in all the cages around you, look at you just like Disball is doing. Their shrieks and chattering suddenly cease.**"*
>
> *"**I knew you were coming. My friends told me**.... I was going to release the juggernaut and the behemoths later to destroy this filthy city, **but I've changed my mind.** You can leave now, and live a little longer. Otherwise..." ☆ He gives you **a wintry smile** and turns to leave. You reach for your weapon. **Before you can draw it, he turns back toward you, his smile wider. "So be it.""***

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⚠⚠ **And the crowd is clapping, because they think it is a show.**

☆ Then black annises clearing an impossible moat, ⚠ *"you want to cry suddenly, and you fight off the depression as you draw your weapons.* ***Then the hairs on your arms tingle and your smartgun link goes dead.*** *A second later,* ***you feel the power from your fetishes and other protective spells vanishing.*** ☆☆☆ ***Now you remember why you never wanted a pet....****"*

⚠⚠⚠ THE ENTITY'S PLAN IS TO FRAME ITS OWN HOST

Disball is possessed, and the thing inside him knows it is finished the moment it recognises the runners. ☆ It needs two things: **to escape, and to make sure Disball dies.** *"****A dead man can't tell tales****, and meanwhile the entity can find a new host unknown to anyone."*

> ⚠⚠⚠ ***"The best way to accomplish these ends is to cause mass confusion and create a situation in which the runners must kill Disball in order to save innocent people from harm."***

☆☆ **So it makes for the behemoth pens**, which hold six behemoths and **a baby juggernaut**, intending a stampede through the surrounding district — ⚠ *"hundreds of people might die."*

☆☆☆ **AND THE MENAGERIE IT RELEASES TO SLOW THEM DOWN IS A PURPOSE-BUILT ANTI-SHADOWRUNNER TOOLKIT.** *"The entity knows that Disball's death* ***cannot be too easy****, or the runners will suspect something is up."*

Critter	What it takes away
Lesser thunderbirds	⚠ EMPs — **smartgun links, drones, and possibly cyberware**
Merlin hawks and nagas	Spellcasting to **neutralise magic and dispel summoned spirits**
Nimue's salamanders	**Drain spells and prevent astral connections**
Quicksilver mongeese	⚠⚠ **Overlapping accident zones — guns jam, cyberware fails**
☆ **A wild minotaur or two**	Confusion, *"if all this doesn't seem like a tough enough challenge"*

⚠⚠ **Every one of those disables a different player archetype.** ☆ The rigger's drones, the mage's spells, the samurai's smartlink, the decker's electronics. **The adventure is systematically stripping the party of its answers before the last fight.**

☆ **Then three waves** — the primate area, the small mammal exhibit (⚠ birdmen at **four or five per runner**), and the Large Animal area, where ⚠⚠⚠ **Disball needs three turns to open the pen electronically.**

HOW IT ENDS — AND THE COVER STORY IS THE ENTITY'S

☆ **The Johnson arrives with City Services, DocWagon and Lone Star**, listens to their account, and walks them past the police calling them ***"just bystanders caught in the mess, officers."***

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⚠⚠ **The next day everything supports them.** Zoo security cameras recorded the fight. And the authorities found **Disball's diary**, in which he describes *"his slow evolution into **a toxic shaman**."*

> ⚠⚠⚠ ***"In reality, the entity wrote the diary entries to frame Disball."***

☆☆☆ *"The **'lone madman' story** will be the one leaked to the press. **It will sound outlandish, but the press will be forced to accept it because all the evidence backs it up.** ⚠ **Whatever the runners say will not affect the official story or the Johnson's opinion.**"*

☆☆ **And the tail is the best part.** Runners who keep watching the newsfeeds *"will discover **a rise in animal attacks and strange incidents throughout North America** over the next few months (**though nothing unusual happens in Seattle**). ⚠ The incidents are **not sufficiently concentrated in any one spot to arouse suspicion**, but **runners who know what they are looking for will spot the connection.**"*

☆ **Parashield, meanwhile, gets rich.** Corporations pour investment in *"interested in **replicating Disball's animal-control abilities**"* — ⚠ which nobody can do — and the company uses the attention to push its other products. ☆☆ *"The runners may well encounter **altered paranormal beasties in more than a few corp compounds** on subsequent runs."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **Clean records, new SINs, and Registered Equipment Edges — ⚠ paid by Lone Star, and therefore traceable to Lone Star.**
- ⚠⚠ **A cover story they cannot correct**, backed by evidence their enemy manufactured.
- ☆☆ **The certain knowledge that something walked out of that zoo**, and that it is now somewhere else in North America doing it again more carefully.
- ⚠ **No bounty on any animal killed on zoo grounds** — *"zoo authorities have enough influence to tie up the payments in bureaucratic red tape."*
- ☆ **And a man they had to kill**, who spent his life caring for animals and meant every word of the speech he gave before he stopped shaking.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The entity, at large and improving**	⚠⚠ **Anywhere, ever.** ☆ The book offers it as a recurring threat and says outright it *"may be the first or only spirit of its kind, or… **a new technique that some spirits have recently begun to use**"*
☆☆ **The scattered North American attacks**	☆ **A background drumbeat only the runners can read** — three lines of newsfax, whenever a season needs one
☆ **The Lone Star Johnson**	⚠ A fixer who *"specialises in government and law-enforcement runs"* and **is not on any Matrix record**
⚠⚠ **Their clean records**	☆ Lone Star gave them those, ⚠ **and Lone Star can take them back**
☆ **Parashield's altered beasts**	**Corp compounds for the rest of the campaign**
⚠ **Knight Errant circling the Seattle contract**	☆☆ Live from here on — **and Ares owns Knight Errant**

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> **CROSSOVER — NONE. AND THIS IS THE FIFTH REFUSAL, SO HERE IS THE STANDING NOTE.**

> **An unexplained astral entity that possesses a man, commands animals, masks itself from every astral search, kills three Lone Star mages and then frames its own host with a forged diary is *precisely* what a table will file under "the Enemy."** It is not.
>
> **The campaign has now offered five of these and refused all five** — the free spirit in **2.2**, the Aztec idol in **2.5**, the toxic Avenger in **3.4**, Alan Riv in **5.1**, and this. **That is a lot of refusals, and it would be a cheat if the players had never been shown the real thing.**
>
> **They have.** They stood on the outcropping in **4.6** and watched an army building a bridge out of bone. **The Enemy is not a mystery the campaign is withholding; it is a fact the campaign has already delivered.** Which means every Sixth World horror that *isn't* it can be exactly what it appears to be, **and the players are equipped to tell the difference.**

> **So the discipline is not "never let anything be the Enemy." It is: the Enemy has had its episode, and everything else in this world gets to be its own thing.** Say none of this at the table. **If a player asks whether the entity was one of them, the answer is that nobody knows what it was — which is true.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

6.1 and 6.2, structurally. Two episodes in a row ended with an institution filing the truth. **This one ends with the truth being filed *by the monster* — and Lone Star, the press and their own employer all helping.**

And 5.1, closely enough to be worth noticing. In Season Five the runners fought a toxic shaman with a private, human reason for existing. **Here the official story is that they fought a toxic shaman with a private, human reason for existing** — *and it is a lie written by something else.*

The Mob War is referenced as recent history in the Star's press problems. If the campaign ran it, say so; if not, it happened to somebody else and Lone Star is still paying for it.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Read the prologue aloud, in timestamps, flat.** It is four minutes and it establishes the entire premise: **the city is full of monsters and the response is a paperwork backlog.**
- **Wall off the astral on the first attempt, not the third.** *"Several stone walls to beat their heads against."* **A magician who learns this early gets to be useful in other ways; one who learns it late has spent the session frustrated.**
- **Fake the random encounter rolls in the sewers.** Ask for a marching order. Ask if they are mapping. **Let them feel competent for exactly one encounter.**
- **Run the two technicians straight and never explain them.** They are eccentric, that is all, **and the table will spend a week convinced otherwise.**
- **Play Disball's speech as a man cracking up, because he is.** He believes every word. **Then let the trembling stop mid-sentence and every animal in earshot turn its head.**

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- ⚠⚠ **Take their toys away on schedule.** ☆ Thunderbirds for the electronics, nagas for the magic, mongeese for everything mechanical. **The point is not damage; it is that nothing they rely on works.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And make them kill him.** ☆ *"Disball will meet his fate no matter what."* **The entity engineered a situation in which killing an innocent man is the only way to save hundreds of people, and it worked.**
- ☆☆ **Then run the diary.** ⚠ Flat, next session, as good news from their employer. **Their names are clear and the evidence is perfect, and one of them will work out why.**

6.4 · Forbidden Fruit — standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Predator and Prey*** (FASA), adventure 1 of 3. ☆ **Seattle → Iquitos, Peru → Amazonia.** ⚠ Requires that it happen **after Dunkelzahn's will** — which the season already guarantees.

☆ **Karma:** surviving **1** · threat level **2** · **Dr. Sanders survives 1** · **Dr. Al-Mansour survives 1** · bringing back intact kiwis **1** · ⚠⚠ **letting any spider-beasts loose over California −1.**

⚠ **Party fit is worth saying out loud before you schedule it.** *"Ideally, the group should contain at least one mage,* ***or better yet, a shaman.***" ⚠⚠ **Deckers** ***"may feel a bit like fifth wheels"*** — thousands of miles from a jackpoint — and **riggers struggle without portable drones.** ☆ The book's answer is honest: ***"Sometimes fighting creatures means you fight them on their own turf."***

☆☆☆ **THE ONE-LINE PITCH: the runners are hired to perform a penetration and extraction — *for a plant.*** ⚠ *"Not a manufacturing plant, mind you —* ***the kind with leaves.***"

THE JOB, AND THE HONEST MEN WHO ORDERED IT

☆☆ **Green Globe International is chasing one of the will's bequests: ten million nuyen to the first party to cultivate the Brazilian kiwi outside its native environment.** ☆ GGI has the researchers, the facilities and the know-how. ⚠ **What it does not have is a plant**, because the species grows only in Amazonia and **Amazonia has flatly refused them entry.**

☆☆☆ **The prologue is two business partners arguing about whether to become criminals, and both of them are right.**

Edwin Danforth throws his briefcase across the office — *"they let us spend ten months and half a million nuyen planning this expedition…* ***Delicate balance, my hoop!***" — and then makes the case for the company they thought they were building:

> *"****I thought GGI was supposed to be a newer, cleaner company.*** *We may not have the resources to compete with the big boys, but* ***we've got our integrity.*** *We've avoided the corruption and crime that the megas are full of,* ***and people respond to that. We're making it, and we're making it by doing honest business.***"

⚠⚠ **And his partner's answer is unanswerable:**

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> *"**You're kidding yourself. We're a small fish in a pond full of sharks, and the only reason we haven't been snapped up yet is that we haven't produced anything worth taking over.** If we're going to stand on our own and make those principles you're so proud of mean something, **we need capital.**... All over the world, megacorporations and one-man shops are scrabbling for pieces of Dunkelzahn's estate, and **I doubt any of them are sticking to purely legal means.** ⚠ **If we stand on our principles, we're going to get trampled by everyone else who's running for the money.**"*

☆☆ **Danforth folds, and picks his own epitaph:** *"**'Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder.' George Washington.**... All right. Do it.* ⚠⚠ ***But I don't want to know anything about it, okay?**... **Just do your dirty work and leave me out of it.**"*

☆ **The meet itself is played completely straight.** Randall Pape *"has nothing to hide except his own identity and the specific name of his company"* and genuinely believes he is making a fair offer. ☆☆ **100,000 nuyen** — 20,000 up front, 80,000 on delivery, ☆ up to **25% more** on a Negotiation Test against his skill of 6, ⚠ *"he's on a strict timeline and needs to get a competent team on retainer ASAP."* **Plus 10,000 if a team rigger flies the plane.**

⚠ **He will not name the plant.** ☆☆ *"Of course, **if the runners bother to check out a copy of Dunkelzahn's will, they can easily figure out what Mr. Johnson is probably after.**"*

☆☆☆ MAGIC IN AMAZONIA — THE MOST PORTABLE RULESET IN THE BOOK

Amazonia has been regrowing its rainforest with fertility magic on an unmatched scale, and the magic is still running. ☆ Everything below applies inside Amazonian borders and is reusable anywhere the campaign goes back.

	Effect
⚠⚠ **Background count 1, everywhere**	**+1 to all astral target numbers** for hermetic mages, physical adepts **and shamans of urban totems**
☆ **Wilderness totems**	**No penalty**
☆☆ **Jungle totems** — Gator, Gecko, Jaguar, Snake	**Astral target numbers reduced by 1**
☆☆ **Nature spirits**	Conjure normally, ☆ then **add 1, 2 or 3 to the spirit's Force** (2D6 ÷ 2, round up)
⚠⚠⚠ **And they will refuse you**	Order a spirit to **harm or pollute the rainforest or its creatures** and it makes an **opposed Willpower Test** against the conjuror. ☆ Win and it refuses — **and it does not cost a service**

☆☆☆ **The land itself picks a side, and it is not the corporate mage's.**

⚠⚠ **But note the exemption, because it is the sharpest line in the ruleset:** ordering a spirit to attack Amazonian soldiers or citizens **does not count as harming the rainforest.** *"The magic involved is designed to protect the forest plants and the creatures, Awakened and otherwise, that dwell amid them.* ☆☆ ***Humans and metahumans may help guard the jungle, but they are not considered part of it.**"*

BICHO

☆☆ **The guide takes their equipment away, and every confiscation is good tradecraft.**

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- ⚠ **The boat.** GGI brought a gleaming new Dolphin III on a padded trailer. Bicho's first words: *"**Forget this boat. We'll use mine.**"* ⭐⭐ *"You think you can just get a new, expensive boat like this across the border? **You might as well paint 'illegal foreign research' on the side in big orange letters.**... you must have one that **looks like it belongs here**, one that the border guards **know.**"*
- ⭐ **The radios**, because Amazonia monitors the airwaves. And half the scientific gear: ⚠ *"my boat is not so big, you know... **We can leave behind these electronics or half the food. What do you think?**"*
- ⭐ **The heavy weapons.** *"**We're just trying to explore the rainforest, not blow it up.**"* Pistols, rifles and shotguns; an SMG at a pinch.
- ⚠⚠ **And the armour, which is a real mechanic:** *"**What good will it do you? None**, against a snakebite, or a basilisk's eyes, or a caiman — **they don't eat you until** **you've drowned.** Armor might help against the border patrols, **but if you're in a fight with them, you've already lost.**"* ⭐ Anyone who insists takes **one box of Stun per point of impact armour** during daylight hours.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HE IS A BIGOT, WHICH IS THE ADVENTURE'S REAL FUSE.** He addresses himself to the humans, and *"**Dr. Fukuhara will quickly assert his leadership, and there will be a quiet moment while Bicho processes this fact.**"* ⚠ He takes an instant dislike to **Dr. Al-Mansour**, *"a particularly unusual and fierce-looking metahuman" — "the two exchange no words, but **Dr. Al-Mansour obviously senses Bicho's hostility.**"* ⭐⭐ **Metahuman runners get the same cold shoulder** — *"though he won't be openly rude to anyone **yet.**"*

⭐⭐ ONE PANIC, THREE MONSTERS

When the shooting starts at a basilisk, all three scientists bolt in different directions — and each has his own encounter with the jungle. ⭐⭐⭐ The runners have to choose an order, and the order matters.

- ⚠ **Dr. Fukuhara** blunders into **a wyrd mantis**. ⭐ The timing is a genuine mechanic: the GM rolls **1D6 × 5 minutes** for how long until he stumbles onto it, the players roll the same for how fast they reach him. **Beat it and the mantis is still hidden; lose and they hear him scream — ⚠⚠ and the female arrives on the third combat round.** ⚠ Wait for the scream instead of moving, and they arrive to find **two mantises posturing over him.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Dr. Sanders falls twenty-five metres down a ravine into a naga's lair — and this is the best encounter in the book, because it is not a fight.** *"This snakelike being simply **sits and stares** at the good doctor until he makes a move. She then **follows him, watching him intently** until he is rescued."* ⚠ Confronted by more than four people she flees. ⭐⭐ *"**If the runners act friendly, she will stay, watching them as if learning from their every movement.** ⚠ If they become hostile, **she will fight for one Combat Round and then flee.**"* ⭐ And Sanders will not shout for help — too frightened to move — **but he will talk, hoping to lead them to him.**
- ⚠⚠ **Dr. Al-Mansour runs for help and finds the border patrol**, who make him lead them back to the gunfire. ⭐ He thinks he is bringing the team reinforcements.

⚠⚠⚠ THE TWO DEATHS

Two hours after they make camp with the fruit, Dr. Sanders comes out of his bedroll screaming and hacking at his own arm with Bicho's machete.

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⚠ *"If someone doesn't stop him,* ***he will continue hacking at his arm until he passes out from blood loss; he can't strike at an angle that will sever the arm, but he is doing dreadful damage to himself.***" ☆ He has already taken a Moderate wound and **inflicts another every turn until stopped** — ⚠⚠ swinging at anyone who tries to restrain him, *"while he is unlikely to actually hit anyone,* ***the threat may keep his would-be rescuers at bay.***"

☆☆ Subdued, he collapses in tears. ***"The only comprehensible words are, 'I didn't eat it, I didn't eat it…'"***

☆☆☆ **AND THE OBVIOUS EXPLANATION IS WRONG, WHICH THE BOOK FLAGS OUTRIGHT.** There are chunks of kiwi by his bedroll. *"The obvious conclusion, which Dr. Al-Mansour states if no one else does, is that* ***Sanders decided to taste the fruit*** *and suffered the severely hallucinogenic consequences.* ⚠⚠ ***This conclusion, though reasonable, is wrong.***"

⚠⚠ **The fruit is not hallucinogenic. It is a nursery.** *"These spiderlike creatures* ***lay their eggs in the flesh of the fruit****; the eggs hatch into larvae that* ***first eat the fruit, then seek out a warmer, larger host in which to pupate.*** *In this case, the larger host was Dr. Sanders."*

The next morning Dr. Al-Mansour opens Fukuhara's tent and screams. ⚠⚠⚠ ***"His face, body, clothes and backpack are riddled with dozens of bloody, centimetre-wide holes."*** He had been carrying a pack full of infested fruit all day; body heat and movement woke the larvae, ⚠ **and he was a deeper sleeper than Sanders.**

☆☆☆ **AND THEN THE FUSE BURNS DOWN.** Al-Mansour turns with a pistol aimed at Bicho's heart — ⚠ **not because he believes it, but *"because he can think of nothing else to do."*** ☆ He has felt Bicho's hostility for a week and it is the only shape his terror has. ⚠⚠ Bicho freezes, then dives, comes up with his shotgun, and *"unless forcibly stopped right away, he shouts, '****Die, you worthless ¡troga! scum!****' and fires."*

⚠ **The shotgun blast brings the border patrol.** ☆☆ *"The two men will scream obscenities at each other and exchange fire* ***unless forcibly prevented from doing so.***" ⚠⚠ And if the runners are captured, *"GGI will* ***deny all knowledge*** *of the expedition, and the runners will probably* ***rot in an Amazonian jail — if they're lucky. If not, they'll be executed.***"

☆ **The book's cheerful reminder:** ***"Make sure to ask the players if they're bringing the kiwis with them.*** *They will almost certainly say yes…* ⚠⚠ ***the presence of the kiwis is also necessary to set up the dramatic final encounter.***"

☆☆☆ HOMEWARD BOUND

Somewhere over the ocean, a faint scratching from behind the cargo door.

☆☆ *"You know how* ***the psycho killers in horror movies always crop up for one last scare after they're supposedly dead?*** *This encounter is exactly that…* ⚠⚠ ***And they're on a pressurized plane at high altitude. They have nowhere to go but down.***"

⚠ **Three spider-beasts per runner** — a third of a metre long, *"with jaws dripping hallucinogenic saliva.* ⚠ ***They are also ravenous.***" ☆ They are not intelligent, **just persistent**: left alone, enough of them crawl onto the door handle that **their weight unlocks it.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE DECOMPRESSION RULE IS THE BEST SET-PIECE MECHANIC IN THE BOOK:**

> ☆ The creatures are **agile and hard to hit: +1 to all target numbers against them.**
> ⚠⚠ And *"if the characters use **firearms** against the critters, **they will almost certainly decompress the cabin.** Any gun with a base Power of 8 or more, except for one that fires shot or flechette rounds, **will penetrate the Skytruck's hull.**"*
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Add +1 to all target numbers — for runners *and* spider-beasts — for every three such rounds fired.** ☆☆ And **for each +1, roll 1D6 every turn; on a 1, a spider-beast is sucked through a hole in the hull and plummets to the earth.**

☆☆ **So shooting works, and shooting is how they lose.** ⚠ **Every round fired makes the fight harder for everyone and drops live specimens onto California.**

HOW IT ENDS — FOUR GRADED OUTCOMES

What they bring back	What Pape does
⚠⚠ **Nothing but a story about spider-creatures**	*"**He won't even consider believing them.**"* No fee, ⚠ and he tells his contacts they are **"either incompetents or murderers."** ☆ Hard to find work until they can prove it
⚠ **Fruit, no scientists**	Suspicion — ☆☆ **and he asks Bicho.** *"Bicho's version of the story will determine if Pape blames the runners."* ⚠⚠ At worst, a second meet that is **a Lone Star sting**
☆ **A scientist, no fruit**	Aghast, but fair. **25 per cent of the balance**, ☆☆ and no rumours — ⚠ *"even if the only survivor is the incoherent Dr. Sanders, **a medical exam will reveal the larva inside him**"*
☆☆ **Fruit and a living scientist**	**Paid in full**, horrified, grateful, ☆ and GGI may hire them again

⚠⚠ **Note what the second row means: how the team treated a bigoted guide across a week of escalating tension is now their alibi.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE CONSEQUENCE THAT OUTLIVES THE ADVENTURE.** If any spider-beasts fell out of the plane, the runners later hear of *"**a plague of strange insects in the Big Sur region of California.** The beasts are apparently **breeding like crazy**, infecting the state's precious orange groves with their larvae and **causing numerous accidental deaths with their hallucinogenic bites.** ☆☆ No one is entirely sure where they came from; **they just seemed to drop out of nowhere....**"*

⚠ **And the Karma table charges them a point for it.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **Up to 125,000 nuyen** — ⚠ or nothing and a ruined reputation, depending entirely on what they can produce.
- ☆☆ **A guide who tried to murder a client in front of them**, and whose account of the week may decide whether they are arrested.
- ⚠⚠ **Two dead scientists and one with a larva in his arm**, on a job where nobody was supposed to die.
- ☆☆☆ **A naga who watched them**, *"as if learning from their every movement"* — ⚠ **if they were kind to her.**
- ⚠ **And possibly an ecological disaster in California that nobody will ever trace to them.**

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PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐ **The Big Sur infestation**	⚠⚠ **Unattributable, permanent, and theirs.** ⭐ Three lines of newsfax in any later season
⭐ **Green Globe International**	⚠ An honest company that has now done one dishonest thing — ⭐⭐ **and Danforth still does not know**
⭐⭐ **The Amazonia ruleset**	⭐ **Reusable the moment the campaign goes south again**
⚠ **Bicho, alive**	A guide who will tell his version to anyone who pays — ⭐ **including Lone Star**
⭐ **The naga**	⚠ Nothing, unless the GM wants it. ⭐⭐ **Which is why it is worth remembering**

CROSSOVER — none, and there is a specific refusal to make here.

⚠⚠ **Amazonia belongs to Hualpa**, and the register has him **deliberately unassigned** — a decision taken during the Season Three seeding pass, on the standing principle that ⭐⭐ **an unassigned dragon is not a gap.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not reach for him.** This adventure never mentions him and should not.

⭐ **One thing is worth noticing privately and never using.** The Amazonian ruleset is the only place in the Sixth World where **the land is a party to the conflict** — where nature spirits weigh an order against the forest's interest and refuse it, and where the ground itself gives a jaguar shaman an advantage a corporate hermetic cannot buy. ⭐⭐ **That is a very Fourth World way for a place to behave.** ⚠ It is a **resonance, not an identity**: no Theran did this, no Horror is involved, ⭐ and Amazonia's magic is a modern nation's deliberate policy carried out by living people.

⚠⚠ **So: run the rules, enjoy how strange they feel, and connect nothing.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **4.1, AND THIS WAS PLANTED FIVE SEASONS AGO.** *Harlequin*'s SPIRITUAL chapter took the runners up the Amazon to steal an orchid, and the outline's Planted Here table named this episode by number: ***"Amazonia, and how it works → 6.4 Forbidden Fruit returns here."***

⭐⭐ **So the team already knows this country.** They know the Awakened government's regrowth rituals are winning; they have seen towns where **the inhabitants cut their vehicles free of the plants every morning.** ⚠ They know the border patrols shoot first. ⭐ **Do not re-explain any of it** — let a player be the one who says *"we've been here."*

⭐ **And one deliberate contrast.** In 4.1 a tribe helped them **because Harlequin asked it to.** ⚠⚠ **Here nobody has arranged anything for them, and the jungle is exactly as dangerous as it always was.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐ **Read the boardroom prologue aloud.** ⚠ Two men who built a clean company deciding to stop, ⭐⭐ **and the one with principles asking not to be told.** It is ninety seconds and it makes the employer a person.

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- ⭐ **Let Bicho strip their kit and do not soften it.** ⚠⚠ The boat, the radios, the heavy weapons, the armour. **The adventure is about being underequipped in a place that does not care.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Play his bigotry as a slow fuse, not a scene.** ⭐ A processed pause when the wrong man gives an order. A refusal to speak to Al-Mansour. Cold shoulders for metahuman runners. **A week of it, and then a shotgun.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the three scattered scientists as a real choice with a real clock.** ⚠ Roll the mantis timing honestly in front of them if you like. **Whoever they go to last is the one who suffers.**
- ⭐⭐ **The naga is a test, not an encounter.** ⚠ She watches, she follows, she does not attack. **A team that shoots her has told you something about themselves; a team that lets her watch has too.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let anyone confirm the fruit theory.** ⭐ The obvious explanation is wrong and **nobody in the fiction knows better** — the players find out when Fukuhara's tent opens.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **On the plane, tell them the decompression rule the first time someone fires.** ⚠ Not before. **Then let them watch the target numbers climb while the hull whistles.**
- ⚠ **And count the ones that fell out.** ⭐⭐ **California is a consequence they will not hear about for months, and it should arrive as a news item with no comment attached.**

6.5 · Wild Kingdom

SOURCE

📕 ***Predator and Prey*** (FASA), adventure 2 of 3. ⭐ **Miami → the Atlantic → the Free City of Sekondi, West Africa.** ⚠ The *Cyberpirates* sourcebook is recommended throughout but not required.

⭐ **Karma (team):** survival and threat **2** · ⭐⭐ **getting information out of the Aidoo without killing anyone 1** · getting inside the Tan Tien compound **2** · reaching Dicristofaro **1** · then **one** of: ⭐ **setting Dicristofaro free 1** *or* **bringing him back alive to PBT 1.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Read that last line again. The book pays exactly the same Karma for freeing the man as for delivering him.** ⭐⭐⭐ **It refuses to grade the moral choice and grades only the competence —** ⚠ which is the single most interesting design decision in the collection, and the reason this episode is worth the difficulty.

> 🔪 ⚠⚠⚠ **TALK TO YOUR TABLE BEFORE YOU SCHEDULE THIS ONE.**
>
> **This is an adventure about slavery**, set in a region the book itself describes without softening: *"**The weak local governments, lack of public media and ongoing genocidal wars** mean that the corporations in Sekondi — like just about everyone else in this part of the world — **treat exploitation, life and death very casually.** ⚠⚠ **Mass slaughter and selling captives to the ghoul nation of Asamando have made the ills of wage slavery seem mild by comparison.**"* Its closing line is *"**this is the Third World of the Sixth World, and it can get ugly.**"*

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> ⭐⭐ **The material is good and it is not gratuitous** — the horror is economic, the villains are corporations, and the victim is a man with a name who begs. ⚠ But it is the hardest hour in the campaign and **it ends by asking the players to decide whether to hand a human being back into bondage.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **Two practical notes.** ① **Say what the episode is about beforehand**, the way you would for 5.3. ② ⚠⚠ **Do not let the party's answer be forced.** The book does not force it and neither should you — ⭐ **the Karma is identical, and only the consequences differ.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE PREMISE

Phoenix Biotechnologies hires the runners to escort a shipment of valuable cargo by sea from Miami to Sekondi.

⚠ **The cargo is Dr. Albert Dicristofaro, a research neurologist**, and he is in the hold.

⭐⭐ **He went willingly.** He was a genuine, enthusiastic extraction from JHIH Corporation, delighted to be worth 320,000 nuyen and looking forward to a Bahamas laboratory. ⚠⚠ **The prologue is his abduction told entirely from inside his own growing relief**, which is what makes the last line work: the Bahamas *"fell through,"* the cerebral specialists were *"downsized to maximize our competitive value,"* and PBT has *"made other plans"* — a transfer to the **Sekondi operation**, where his work on Broca's area can be paired with ⭐ *"direct **living-tissue** applications, with minimal interference."*

⚠ **And he hears only the science.** ***"Living tissue… I'm going to be funded for pre-growth specimens?"***

⭐⭐⭐ **Then his handler says she wishes she could go with him**, and *"she was halfway out the door before he processed her last words. **There was something wrong with them, a sort of rote coldness.**"* He runs for the door and it closes on his fingers.

> ⚠⚠⚠ *"He swept aside the food on the bed, then poured and drank his next whiskey methodically. And then one more, slow but not relaxed. **There was no point in hurrying. It was, after all, a long way to the slavers of Africa.**"*

⭐ **The runners are told none of this.** The manifest lists hemp paper, manufactured goods, employee requests and controlled substances — ⚠⚠ **and Dicristofaro's room is marked *"biological samples."***

⭐⭐ **And their Johnson does not know either.** Rachel Liseli of PBT is ***"completely unaware that Dicristofaro is on board the ship"*** and is *"going by the book"* — young, ambitious, professional, and honestly of the view that the job *"may be dangerous, but **isn't illegal.**"*

⭐ **Terms:** 500 shares of PBT stock up front, **2,500 more** at a Bermuda loading, **4,000 on verified delivery** — *"as of eight o'clock this morning, trading averaged **21.3 nuyen a share.**"*

THE VOYAGE

⭐⭐⭐ **The mami wata encounter is one of the strangest and best-written scenes in the knowledge base, and the joke is that it is a diversion.**

> *"A woman's head breaks the surface, then another, and another, long brown hair fanning out behind them. ⚠ **A second glance shows a muzzle instead of a face, and the***

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> ***furred neck and shoulders of a seal.***... Gronk*, one declares.* ***Gronkgronkgronk GRONK* grooooounk.** ⭐⭐*Maybe they want something..."*
>
> *"One pulls* ***a clawed flipper*** *out of the water, like a signal. In a single movement, the others do the same,* ***like some kind of Sea City show.***... *Something about those flippers looks* ***disturbingly human.*** ⚠⚠ *When you hear a sharp* pap *and see the first* ***speargun bolt****, you put your finger on what it is.* ⭐⭐⭐ ***They have opposable thumbs.****"*

⭐ **The book's own description of what follows deserves to be read before running it:** *"Mami wata are essentially* ***trained seals with arms, spearguns and amazing quickness.*** *Their leap onto the boat is most accurately described as* ***a drunken barrage of cascading, ballistic seal fat that promptly shlubs down hatches at the speed of a running horse.*** *Multiply that by twenty, and the sight is either* ***the funniest thing you ever saw or the deadliest.*** ⚠ ***And they're going for the beer.****"*

⚠⚠ **They dive forty metres first,** ***"because they need a running start,"*** **then come straight up out of the water and over ten metres of hull like trick killer whales.** ⭐ Anyone within three metres of the rail rolls **1D6; on a 1–2 they must dodge**, and a collision means **both parties resist 8S Stun.**

⭐⭐ **Once aboard they do not fight properly.** They eat, smash, foul everything, ⚠ carry off the alcohol in their teeth, and *"try to* ***prolong the fight*** *by turning it into* ***a catch-me game*** *in the depths of the vessel."*

⚠⚠⚠ **BECAUSE WHILE THE RUNNERS ARE CHASING SEALS, THREE MEN IN A MINI-SUBMARINE ARE CUTTING A HOLE IN THE HULL WITH A MONOFILAMENT SAW.** ⭐ They blow it at the same moment the mami wata's bombs go off, send a diver in for Dicristofaro, and leave. **The hole is tiny relative to the ship, so the vessel takes on water slowly and nobody notices.**

⭐ **The clues afterwards:** a **Perception (12)** from inside the ship notices she is **riding lower and running slower**; ⚠⚠ **a Perception (5) from anyone who dives under the hull finds the hole.**

⭐⭐ *"If they don't figure out that someone ripped them off while they were busy,* ***that's fine; they'll find out once they get to Sekondi.****"*

SEKONDI

⭐ **The Free City is the exception in West Africa.** Most ethno-nations — the Asante and Baule empires among them — take a strong anti-corporate line; ⚠ Sekondi has invited the megacorporations in wholesale and is **the West African base of operations for hundreds of them.** ⭐⭐ *"****All of them have agreed to keep Sekondi a safe haven.*** *Whatever drek goes down outside Sekondi doesn't come past the city walls,* ***or both parties are punished by the best military strike team a war zone can offer.****"*

⚠⚠⚠ *"In Sekondi, business is conducted in* ***formal, corporate manner — even when that 'business' is bringing back human body parts as evidence of a job well done.****"*

⭐⭐ **The culture shock is the encounter, and the book lists what it looks like:** their PBT contact introduces them to **both of his wives**; ⭐ **people carve stools on their lunch hours**; ⚠ a few streets outside the city there is no plumbing; ⚠⚠ ***"almost everyone, even corporate***

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suits and pregnant teenage girls, openly carries a gun. *Bleeding men are loaded off jeeps and boats, but they get little medical attention.* ***Corpses are packed in ice and piled in vans.*** *Many people are maimed and cannot afford cyber replacement parts."*

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN THE ADVENTURE STRIPS THEM OF EVERYTHING THEY NORMALLY RUN ON.** *"Because* ***none of the player characters' usual contacts are available*** *in this adventure, these rolls apply to contacts they make in Sekondi and Accra.* ⚠ ***Matrix and Shadowland access is limited in West Africa****; to get it, the characters must use their own satellite uplink to bypass the few official jackpoints."* ⚠⚠ They do not look local, they do not sound local without **a Language Skill of 5 or better** in a blend of English and Akan, ⭐ and worst of all **they do not look like they belong to anything.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"In West Africa, family is everything — whether kinfolk, corporation, pirate crew or running team. Family means someone to watch your back. Without that, you're easy prey."***

THE HUNT

⭐ **Ahmadou Kourouma of PBT meets the ship with an assault-rifle escort and a twenty-year-old laundry cart, and tells them the job is not finished:** *"Someone* ***broke open the floor to his room and removed him.*** ⚠⚠ *We must have him back before my superiors consider your job finished.* ***So you so-called professionals will need to retrieve him if you hope ever to see your homes again.****"*

The trail runs to Ewe pirates in the Asante Kingdom, and then to a Tan Tien compound far up the Volta River guarded by paranormal animals. ⚠ Tan Tien wants Dicristofaro because it is trying to build **a working Matrix interface for a semi-intelligent creature** — ⭐ *"other than the potential profit... this achievement would net the corp* ***a valuable award from the Draco Foundation.****"*

⚠⚠ **Two corporations are competing for the same dead man's prize money, and the currency is a person.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE JUNGLE PURSUIT IS BUILT AS A DEDUCTION CHAIN, AND THE THIRD LADDER IS THE BEST.** Three skills, three angles:

Skill	What it tells them
Stealth (Wilderness) (4)	Footprints → his escorts will step on roots → he will shed clothes → ⭐⭐ **at four successes:** ***"Tan Tien's critters work by smell, and his escorts know this. He's going to have to get rid of that scent trail somehow."***
Biology (Botany) (4)	Easy paths → riverbank weeds are impassable → ⭐ **an irrigation ditch is cleared regularly and is therefore the fastest route**
⭐⭐⭐ **Psychology (Panic) (4)**	***"This is a blind run.*** *His escorts couldn't have planned it much either"* → he will run at random and only choose a direction later → ⚠ **he brought no food or soap; his escorts grabbed guns**

⭐ **And a Firearms (4) ladder reads a distant gunshot** all the way up to **six successes** — *"full metal jacket Hi-Ex brass fired from* ***a PAAU, the Tan Tien knockoff of the Predator.*** ⭐*(And people say you need to get out more.* ***Who's laughing now, huh?****)"*

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⚠⚠ **The hook line for the whole sequence:** *"In this encounter the runners* ***get to play hunter****, so give them all sorts of enticing clues...* ⚠⚠⚠ ***Build it up until halfway through, when they realize they have become the hunted.****"*

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN THEY CATCH HIM

> *"There's your prey at last —* ***a short, pudgy, balding white guy with four-day stubble and a hairy stomach hanging over his mud-soaked pair of slacks.*** *He's drenched from sweat and rain, and* ***panting so loudly you're surprised you didn't hear him all the way back at Tan Tien.*** ⚠ *He squints at you and* ***looks like he's going to faint.****"*

☆☆ **He was freed by anti-slavery activists and is running north for sanctuary in Burkina Faso.** ⚠ Three young African orks stand between him and the runners, *"serene yet wary, at home in the humid jungle,"* guns held casually — ⚠⚠ **and a corpse on the ground at their feet, blood matting its black-and-white fur.**

☆☆☆ **Then he begs.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do they enslave an innocent man, or do they defy their employers and strand themselves in Africa?**

HOW IT ENDS — THE KARMA IS NEUTRAL AND THE WORLD IS NOT

☆☆ **Bring him back** and Kourouma is delighted: dinner in an air-conditioned restaurant, free medical care, ☆ full payment *(⚠ and he sticks Tan Tien with the locomotive repair bill)*, an open invitation to stay in Sekondi under PBT protection, and a chartered flight home whose crew ☆☆ **turns a blind eye to whatever the runners are carrying.** ☆ Dicristofaro's return sends PBT stock from **21.3 to 28.8 nuyen a share within 1D6 ÷ 2 months**, and Kourouma pays **500 shares more** for evidence they *"downsized"* Tan Tien.

⚠⚠ **Free him** and they get nothing but the stock already paid, **no flight**, and no way out of Africa except signing onto a ship or working a run for somebody else. ☆ Kourouma *"holds a grudge and PBT employers consider the runners* ***untrustworthy****; any future PBT jobs they may get* ***may be setups.****"* ⚠ Treat him as **a Rating 4 enemy in Sekondi, Rating 2 back in North America.**

☆ **And Tan Tien hates them either way** — ⚠⚠ though its reach is limited to Africa and Asia, *"the corp will hold a grudge for a long time, so* ***future overseas trips could spell trouble.****"*

☆☆☆ **So the design is exact: the Karma table says the two choices are worth the same, and the world says they are not.** ⚠ **That is not a contradiction. It is the point.** The campaign does not tell the players which was right; **it only charges them for the one that costs.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **7,000 PBT shares** if they delivered him, appreciating by a third — ⚠ or **3,000 shares and no ticket home** if they did not.
- ☆☆ **Ahmadou Kourouma** as a patron or as a Rating 4 enemy, **depending entirely on one decision in a jungle.**
- ⚠⚠ **Tan Tien**, permanently, either way.

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- ⭐⭐⭐ **And a memory of a man begging**, which the campaign will never mention again unless they do.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Whichever way they answered**	⚠⚠ **Written into the save as a fact about these characters.** ⭐ Like `stayed_with_thayla`, it is not a plot hook; **it is who they are**
⭐⭐ **PBT stock**	⚠ They are now **shareholders in a company that trades in people — ⭐⭐ and the value went up because they returned one**
⭐ **Kourouma, as patron or enemy**	Overseas work for the rest of the campaign
⚠ **Tan Tien's Matrix-interface project**	⭐ A corporation trying to jack a dolphin into the grid **for a Draco Foundation prize**
⭐ **Dicristofaro, if freed**	⚠⚠ A neurologist in Burkina Faso who **owes them everything and can never repay it**

> **CROSSOVER — none. ⚠ And the closest thing to one is a Sixth World callback, not a Fourth World one.**

> ⭐⭐ **Sekondi's economy includes selling captives to the ghoul nation of Asamando.** ⚠⚠ The runners spent **5.6** being saved by ghouls, learning Ghoultown's history, and — if they kept their promise — **carrying Tamir Grey's journals out of a sealed city so the world would know ghouls are people.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **Here is a functioning state that buys them by the truckload, and nobody in Sekondi thinks it is remarkable. ⚠ Do not have anyone raise it.** If a player does, ⭐ **that is the episode working.**

> ⚠⚠ **Nothing here touches the Fourth World and nothing should.** The Awakened animals are animals, the corporations are corporations, and **the atrocity is entirely modern and entirely human.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **THE SEASON'S THESIS, FOR THE FOURTH TIME AND AT ITS WORST.** 6.1: a manager files the greatest discovery in history because a phone number is worth more. 6.2: a corporation burns a body to tidy an accounting problem. 6.3: the monster writes the cover story and the press has to print it. ⚠⚠⚠ **6.5: a man is freight, and the paperwork is in order.**

⭐⭐ **And the will is still doing it.** ⚠ Every job this season traces back to a bequest — Mars photographs, an aquasphere prize, a Brazilian kiwi, ⭐⭐⭐ **and now a Draco Foundation award for jacking an animal into the Matrix, being competed for with a kidnapped neurologist. ⚠⚠ Dunkelzahn left the world ten million nuyen at a time, and the world is eating itself over it.**

⭐ **5.6, again, quietly** — see the box above.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the prologue, and run it as relief rather than horror.** ⚠ He is *delighted*. He is worth two million UCAS dollars. He is thinking about pre-growth specimens. ⭐⭐ **The**

reader works out what is happening about four sentences before he does, and that gap is the whole scene.

- ⚠⚠ **Do not tip the manifest.** *"Biological samples"* is on the list and nobody comments. ☆ **A team that searches the hold has earned an entirely different adventure, and you should let them have it.**
- ☆☆ **Play the mami wata for comedy first.** ⚠ Barking, thumbs, beer, *"a drunken barrage of cascading, ballistic seal fat."* ☆☆☆ **They will remember it as the funniest fight of the campaign right up until Sekondi, when they find out what it was for.**
- ⚠ **Let them miss the hull breach.** ☆ Perception 12 from inside is hard on purpose. **The book is explicit that not noticing is fine.**
- ☆☆ **Take away the contacts, the Matrix and the language, and say so plainly at the dock.** ⚠⚠ *"Without that, you're easy prey."* **This is the one episode where the party's five seasons of accumulated infrastructure is worth nothing.**
- ☆☆☆ **Run the hunt as a hunt and let them enjoy being good at it** — three deduction ladders, a distant gunshot read down to the ammunition. ⚠ **Then turn it over halfway through.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And when they catch him, stop talking.** ☆ Describe a fat, exhausted, frightened man in ruined slacks, describe the three people standing between him and them, ☆☆ **and then ask each player in turn what their character does. Do not editorialise, do not steer, and do not reward either answer with approval.**

6.6 · King of the Mountain — SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Missions*** (FASA), adventure 4 of 4. ☆ **Alaska — Mountain 9347, formerly Fort Ross.** ⚠⚠ The book calls it *"an **advanced-level** mission… best suited for an **experienced** gamemaster and players,"* with **a high risk of death.**

☆ **Team Karma:** making the HALO jump and reaching the mountain **1** · getting inside quietly **1** · survival and threat **3** · removing Michael **1** · dealing with Fenmore **1** *(negotiating his capture **or** killing him)* · ☆☆ **harming none of the girls except the Alphas — 1.**

☆ **Pay is hazard rate: their regular rate × 3 × days on the mission.** ⚠ Plus **a Purple Heart** for any wound, and ☆☆ **Silver Stars** if they closed it neatly without hurting the children.

> ✎ **WHAT THIS EPISODE CONTAINS — say it before you schedule it.**
>
> **Fort Ross holds 152 kidnapped magically active girls**, aged from about twelve, taken from magophobic families and raised for five years into a religious military cult. ⚠⚠ **The evidence of what has been done to them physically is delivered on a corpse the players may have made themselves.**
>
> ☆☆ **It is not exploitative and it is not lingered on** — the book states the facts once, in a forensic sentence, and moves. ⚠ But it is a finale about children, **and the ending is one the players cannot prevent.**

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> ⭐ **Handle it as you handled 5.3 and 6.5: name the subject in advance, and let anyone opt the campaign sideways.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE FRAME — AND THE BOOK DISMANTLES THE FANTASY IN ITS OPENING PARAGRAPH

"Somewhere in the Top Ten Secret Fantasies of every shadowrunner is ***getting the government's okay to do what they do*** *— no fear of Lone Star, the best equipment money can buy and steady nuyen.* ⚠⚠ ***But playing special-ops characters means more than doing what shadowrunners do best without repercussions.****"*

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"****As a special-ops character, you are part of the military, where taking orders is like breathing.*** *To be in the Special Forces means you love your country, you will defend your country against all comers, and* ***you will die for your country without a second thought.*** ⚠⚠ ***Doubts do not cross your mind.****"*

⚠ **And the frame's iron law:** the mountain requires **subtlety and reconnaissance.** *"If they blow it, they can either fight overwhelming odds and* ***die nobly****, or retreat into the wilderness and* ***die ignobly.*** ⭐⭐⭐ ***There is no honor in letting their country down.****"*

⭐ **Characters are built via *Trained to Be Ghosts*** — everyone gets the **Registered Equipment Edge free**, everyone has a SIN, ⭐⭐ and fresh characters start with **a Karma Pool of 3 and 20 points of Good Karma** to represent prior training missions.

⚠⚠ **The runner conversion is the most cynical passage in the book.** The fee would be **60,000 nuyen or more each** — ⚠ though *"if the player characters need a lot of gear, their military employer may reduce the team's overall payment accordingly (****what, you thought the UCAS military was made of money?****)."* And the military plays rough: it *"can* ***kidnap*** *the player characters or* ***hold loved ones for ransom****...* ***They will therefore be more tenacious than the average megacorp.****"* ⚠⚠⚠ As for why they would hire street talent at all — *"they don't want any trails leading back to them;* ***either that, or they figure no one will survive the job and they don't want to waste their own talent on a suicide run.****"*

⭐⭐⭐ HEARTBREAKER, AND THE BEST PIECE OF CAMPAIGN ADVICE IN THE BOOK

The team commander is an NPC, and he dies early on purpose. *"His speeches and actions at the beginning of the adventure help create a military atmosphere.* ***His death also serves to shake up the characters, making them more cautious and showing them the scale on which they are playing.****"*

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"****Heartbreaker's death will have a much bigger impact on the characters if he is introduced to the players before King of the Mountain begins.****... If the characters are shadowrunners, Heartbreaker can become their Mr. Johnson, UCAS government fixer, military liaison —* ***and even their friend.****"*

⚠⚠ **The book is telling you to spend two or three sessions making the table like a man so that his death lands.** ⭐⭐ **Adopt it as a standing technique: plant the casualty in advance.** ⚠ In this campaign the obvious slot is **6.1** — an AresSpace or federal liaison the team already worked with — **or Meagan O'Rourke's opposite number from 5.8.**

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⭐ **And his voice is the best in the book.** *"Okay, **this City of God is gonna have some new occupants.**... I don't care if it's Santa Claus's fragging workshop or **Lofwyr's dragon hoard!** We're more evil than Satan and better armed than God or Ares!* ⚠ *Damien Knight'd nuke the motherfragger from orbit. **Well, nukes won't scratch this place, so they sent us!**"*

THE BACKGROUND

The Crash of 2029 erased the location of Fort Ross, a half-finished nuclear/biowarfare shelter and weapons stockpile in the Alaskan mountains. ⚠ **Colonel Lawrence Fenmore found surviving hard copy in 2051.**

⭐⭐⭐ **And what makes him novel as a villain is that he is a human supremacist who is not afraid of magic.** *"**Fenmore disagreed with the fear of magic exhibited by many of his fellow human supremacists. He saw magic as the weapon of the future**; anyone who didn't know how to use it would suffer at the hands of those who did.* ⚠ ***Fenmore did not intend to be among the suffering.**"*

⚠⚠ **So with a cadre of disaffected officers and *"an institutionalized mage who called himself the Archangel Michael,"* he began recruiting young, magically active girls from magophobic families** — describing Fort Ross as **a boarding school** where their abilities would be trained *"in a disciplined, appropriately Christian way."*

⭐ **Five years, thirty-five adults, 152 girls.** ⚠⚠⚠ *"A sophisticated blend of **kidnapping ring, military school and personality cult** — collecting magically active girls from around the world and **training them into a fanatical private army.**"* ⚠ Fenmore intends to point it at **Tír Tairngire or Aztlan.**

⭐⭐ **How the UCAS found out** is the prologue: an interrogation of a captured supply shipper who recites *"**He'll kill me with fire from the heavens**... How can you hide from **the City of God?**"* — and then ⚠⚠⚠ **detonates, taking the room with her.** A team of Army Rangers went to look at Mountain 9347. **They never came back.**

THE DROP

⭐ **A storm forces the choice at the ramp:** *"We either take this bird **above** it and drop you and your silk through a lightning storm, or we **heave you early** and you put those bikes to good use."*

⚠ **The jump:** an **Athletics (5)** to steer and link up in the blackness, then **Athletics (5) — (7)** if the first failed — to fly the chute. ⭐ Failure means resisting **4S Stun and 4S Physical on Body alone.** ⚠ Shadowrunners without jump training need **Willpower (5)** to go at all.

⭐⭐ **The environment is the antagonist for the first act.** *"**The sun set about a month ago, and sunrise isn't scheduled until March.**"* No streetlights, no house lights, no campfires — ⚠ **and the stars are behind the storm.** Treat everything as **Minimal Light.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE GEAR LOSS IS A FORCED CHOICE WITH NO GOOD ANSWER.** Two of three crates went into the mountainsides: one held **the snowmobiles and long-range comms**, one held **the tents and clothing**, and the food was split across all three. ⭐ ***"The player characters cannot hope to get all three and survive.**... ⚠⚠ **Sane characters should choose the tents.**"*

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⭐⭐ *"The loss of the comm gear makes the mission more exciting.* ***Without the ability to contact their superiors, the characters must trust themselves to make the best choice for the UCAS.***"

THE DOOR, AND THE FIRST HARD EVIDENCE

⭐ **Finding the entrance takes half a day's circuit and one success on a Perception (6).** *"The huge single door somehow manages to look* ***impressive as hell while being almost impossible to spot.***" ⚠ Anti-aircraft guns under arctic netting, and *"****you really don't like the looks of the little white boxes on the fence posts.***"

⭐⭐ **The sensors are beatable by weather, and the book supplies the weather:** an **Electronics (5)** or **Computer Theory (4)** establishes that motion and infrared detectors *"will not detect their movement, since even a sleet storm would set them off continually.* ⭐***As luck would have it, there's a sleet storm on the way.***" ⚠ Weight plates alarm for an APC but **not for a few people on foot.**

⚠⚠ **Going loud is not an option.** The door is **Barrier 32** behind a **Rating 8 maglock**; the walls are two metres of rock at **Barrier 28.** *"The walls or door might give after enough punishment,* ***but the entire complex will be alerted and waiting.***"

⭐⭐⭐ **AND HERE IS THE FIRST TRUE THING THE PLAYERS LEARN, AND IT IS DELIVERED WITHOUT COMMENT.** A magician who tries the door astrally finds it impenetrable — **and glowing.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ ***"The door has been reinforced with biological material to keep the girls INSIDE."***

⭐ **The wards face inward. Nobody says anything about it.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE DOSSIER

After Heartbreaker dies, the team gathers his belongings to return to his family — and finds a folder.

⚠ **The government has been watching Fenmore since he left the Army.** They know about Archangel Michael. They know Fort Ross is *"some kind of base for his odd cult."* ⭐ *"However,* ***they have no idea why.***"

> ⚠⚠⚠ *"The documents seem to indicate that* ***the UCAS military may have left Fenmore deliberately alone in order to discover what he meant to do before acting against him.*** *In fact, it seems that* ***information on Fort Ross was purposely de-classified for Fenmore.***"

⭐⭐ **Their own government baited the trap, let a kidnapping cult run for five years to see what it would build, and then sent two teams in without telling either one what it was looking at.**

⚠⚠ **And the real orders were never given to the players.** ***"Heartbreaker had orders to talk to Fenmore and Archangel Michael.*** *He was to* ***secure*** *Fort Ross and any experimentation within it,* ⚠ ***without damaging any property or harming any innocents.*** *...* ***The military has no idea if [the school] is a cover or the truth.*** ⭐⭐ ***If it turns out to be true, the military does not want the girls hurt.***"

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⭐ **An optional cruelty the book offers:** obscure the pages *"with **bullet holes and blood** so that the player characters **never get the whole picture**...* ⚠️ ***leaving them leaderless, hallucinating and completely confused.***"

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **And the consequence of going loud is spelled out in advance:** every armed adult converges, ⚠️ **and Archangel Michael calls on all 152 girls if the fight turns against him**, declaring that **this is the Apocalypse.** ⭐ *"If the characters stay and fight the entire population of Fort Ross, **they will most likely die.**"* ⚠️ And even winning earns no commendation, **because it defied a direct order to keep the mission quiet.**

⭐⭐⭐ SANTA'S WORKSHOP — THE SCENE THE ADVENTURE EXISTS TO DELIVER

> *"A soft breeze, **rich with the scent of herbs and incense**, wafts out the door... Standing in front of **Formica lab tables that would look more at home in a New Jersey high school** are **four young girls. They wear Empire-style dresses, ankle-length garments of white silk... Their hair is long and loose, and they look at you with wide, frightened eyes.** ⭐ It takes you a fraction of a second to notice that **two of them have slim, pointed ears**...* ⭐⭐ ***You're at the North Pole for Christmas, chummer, and you've just run into Santa's elves.***"
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ *"Her shoulders draw inward along her neck, **fusing together** as her body rapidly shrinks. Within two breaths of your arrival **an ash-gray dove takes wing out of the neck of the white dress**, which stays upright for a moment before collapsing into a limp pile of cloth... **The discarded dresses lie on the floor like empty shells — and you could swear you're hearing the beginning strains of** **Dies Irae** **from the four birds' throats.***"

⚠️⚠️ **AND THE HOOK IS ONE SENTENCE:** ***"Weirdness reigns. Don't give the players any explanation of what happened. The girls didn't 'throw a shapechange spell' — they just 'turned into doves.'"***

⭐ **What it actually is:** a hermetic shop class. Four girls enchanting fetishes shaped like parchment scrolls, ⭐⭐ **and the singing is a centering ritual to reduce the Drain on their shapechange.** They flee because **every child in Fort Ross has been taught to run from any face they do not know.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **AND IF THE TEAM SHOOTS, THE BOOK TELLS YOU EXACTLY WHAT THEY SEE.** The birds fall, *"**changing back into little girls (wearing only underwear and bleeding) on the way down.**"* Two human, two elf, ⚠️ **between twelve and fourteen years old.** And then, in one flat forensic clause:

> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ *"**Close physical examination reveals incision scars on their abdomens.**"*

⭐⭐ **That is the whole of what the adventure says about it, and it is enough.**

⭐ **Catching one instead is an Unarmed Combat (5)** against **7 dodge dice** — ⚠️ and any bird caught *"turns back into a girl and **immediately falls unconscious in the character's arms.**"*
⭐⭐ **She is astrally projecting; do not mention this unless a player thinks to ask.**

⭐ **And on the classroom wall: two lists, one labelled NAUGHTY and one labelled NICE.**

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⭐⭐⭐ HEAVEN UNMAKES ITSELF

They kill Archangel Michael, and the production values come apart on the corpse.

> *"**The wings disappear.** The halo of light disperses into the atmosphere, and the shining gold robes shrink to reveal **an ugly yellow lab coat.** The body shrinks and then expands, becoming **a short, slightly overweight man with thinning brown hair.** ⚠ **Was this what the whole show was about?**... The golden throne dwindles to **a poorly upholstered desk chair.**"*

⚠⚠ **Then the room switches to Hell.** Lava washes in from all four walls, a column of flame roars up, ⭐ *"a soul-shaking voice booms from the ceiling: '**You have fallen!**'"* — and a man walks through the fire **in a suit.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"'**I hope you don't mind the theatrics ... but then, you just did kill the Archangel Michael**,' says a man who seems to have walked through the wall of fire. He's wearing a suit. **He smiles.**... **Welcome to Hell.**"*

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE REAL DANGER IS NAMED IMMEDIATELY:** *"The immediate switch from Heaven to Hell is disturbing, **but the real hook in this scene is the change of tactics. Fenmore is more intelligent, more subtle and much saner than Michael.** He is an evil, self-centered, manipulative, focused megalomaniac. ⚠ **He is also very good at getting what he wants.**"*

⭐⭐ **His pitch opens with an apology and a surrender**, disowns everything the players have just walked through — *"I did not wish to judge my ally's idiosyncrasies too harshly, **but I see they went further than I thought**"* — and then makes the case:

> *"⚠ **I never planned all this craziness. I just wanted to give these poor girls a home and some use — born magical and completely rejected by their parents, poor things. What kind of life could they possibly have looked forward to?**"*
> *"**When I proposed this plan to my superiors, years ago, they didn't believe it would work. So I chose to start up on my own.** Now I see the UCAS is producing better-trained and more intelligent soldiers than were in my day; ⭐**perhaps they'll make a better decision about my project as well. Shall we cease hostilities and discuss an agreement?**"*

⚠ **He does not want them phoning their superiors, because he is certain the answer would be to neutralise him.** ⭐⭐⭐ ***"If the characters take the time to talk to him, they should end up unsure if he's sold them the next atomic bomb or a three-legged horse.**"*

⚠⚠⚠ HOW IT ENDS, AND THEY CANNOT STOP IT

⭐ **They are believed.** The brass have been recording paranormal data since 2030 and *"not much about magic surprises them"* — ⭐⭐ and they remember Fenmore, whose file is *"thick enough to prop open heavy doors,"* and know that **kidnapping little girls is exactly the sort of thing he would try.**

⚠ **The cover story is that they were helping Quebecois refugees resettle.** ⭐ If they tell anyone the truth, *"most people will think that the characters have gotten shot in the head a few too many times,"* so nobody bothers to silence them.

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And then:

> ⚠⚠⚠ *"The Joint Chiefs realize that **Fenmore's girls are too valuable a resource to lose**, or to risk under supervision of any but their most highly-trained people. **The girls' training continues as a black operation under the auspices of the UCAS military.** ⚠⚠ **These children are never given SINs, rights or a legal existence.** ☆ **The characters are taken off this job permanently so that they will never have 'a need to know' about any of it.**"*

☆☆☆ **The players storm a mountain to stop a man raising kidnapped children into a weapon, and their own government takes the programme over and improves the paperwork.**

⚠ **And the debrief carries an explicit instruction about how that should feel:** contrast *"the relief of spilling their story and being believed"* with ☆☆ *"the **creepy feeling** they get when the UCAS Army apparently accepts their bizarre account **without question.** ☆☆☆ **Plant a little seed of doubt that there are any good guys.**"*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **Hazard pay, a Purple Heart apiece for the wounded**, and ☆☆ **Silver Stars if no child was hurt.** ⚠ One of them may be **promoted into Heartbreaker's job.**
- ⚠⚠ **Fenmore as a 4-point Enemy if he lived** — ☆ whose Power *increases* if the military stops watching him, and whose Knowledge increases **if he ever learns their real names.**
- ☆☆☆ **The knowledge that 152 children exist who have no SIN, no rights and no legal existence** — ⚠ and that they are now training for the same government the players work for.
- ⚠ **And the certainty that they will never be told what happens next.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **152 magically active soldiers in UCAS black-op hands**	⚠⚠ **Season 7 and Season 8.** ☆ A resource nobody acknowledges and everybody could use
☆☆ **The government baits traps and waits five years**	⚠ **Every UCAS job after this.** *"Plant a little seed of doubt that there are any good guys"*
☆ **Fenmore, alive**	⚠⚠ A megalomaniac with friends outside the fort *"who will try to keep the madman's dream alive"*
☆☆ **Escapees**	☆ The book offers it outright: *"some of Fenmore's students **escape at some future point**"* — ⚠ or prove **too conditioned to be usable**
☆ **Heartbreaker's family**	⚠ Somebody has to return his effects, **and the dossier was in them**

CROSSOVER — none, and this is a season finale, so the refusal needs saying clearly.

⚠⚠⚠ **Everything about this episode is shaped to be mistaken for something older**: an Archangel, a City of God, an Apocalypse invoked as a battle order, children singing *Dies Irae* while they turn into birds. ☆☆ **All of it is the private theology of an institutionalised man in a lab coat**, produced with illusions and stage lighting, ⚠ **and the adventure unmakes it on-screen in three sentences.**

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> ☆☆☆ **Which is exactly why it must carry no correspondence.** The campaign has spent six seasons teaching this table to notice when something is older than it looks. ⚠⚠ **Here is an episode that dresses like the oldest thing in the world and is entirely, squalidly modern** — a passed-over colonel, a stolen file, and thirty-five adults with a boarding school.

> ☆ **One thing worth noting privately and never using:** Fenmore intends his army for **Tír Tairngire or Aztlan.** ⚠ That is a Sixth World grudge with Sixth World reasons. **Do not connect it to anything.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **SEASON SIX'S ARGUMENT COMPLETES, AND THIS IS THE WORST VERSION OF IT.** 6.1: a manager files the greatest discovery in history. 6.2: a corporation burns a body to close a ledger. 6.3: the monster writes the cover story. 6.5: a man is freight. ⚠⚠⚠ **6.6: the government takes over the atrocity because the atrocity is an asset.**

☆☆ **And it is the one episode where the institution is *theirs*.** ⚠ In every previous case the players were outside looking in. **Here they are the instrument, they did everything right, and the outcome is that the programme continues with better funding.**

☆ **6.1, structurally.** ⚠⚠ Both *Missions* frames end the same way: **an employer thanks them, invokes their clearance, and files it.** ☆☆ The difference is that in 6.1 the thing filed was a discovery. **Here it is 152 children.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Plant Heartbreaker two or three sessions early.** ⚠⚠ The book asks for it and it is the single highest-value piece of prep in the season. **Make him a friend. Then kill him in the second act.**
- ☆☆ **Run the frame hard from the first minute.** ⚠ Orders, briefings, chain of command, *"doubts do not cross your mind."* **The whole episode is about what happens to people who were built not to ask.**
- ⚠⚠ **Make them choose between the tents and the radios and do not steer.** ☆ *"Sane characters should choose the tents"* — **and then let them be out of contact for the rest of the mission.**
- ☆☆☆ **Deliver the inward-facing wards flat and move on.** ⚠ One sentence: the door is warded to keep something *in*. **Do not underline it.**
- ☆☆ **Give them the dossier and let them read it themselves.** ⚠⚠ Their government declassified Fort Ross *for Fenmore*, watched for five years, and sent them in without the real orders. ☆ **If you use the blood-and-bullet-holes option, decide in advance which half they lose.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Run Santa's Workshop exactly as printed and explain nothing.** ☆ Four frightened girls, two with pointed ears, and then doves and empty dresses and *Dies Irae*. **If they shoot, describe what falls, including the last clause. Then say nothing at all and let the room be quiet.**
- ☆☆ **Play Fenmore as reasonable.** ⚠ He apologises, he disowns Michael, he asks a genuinely difficult question about what these children's lives would otherwise have been, ☆☆☆ **and the players should leave unsure whether they were just sold an atomic bomb or a three-legged horse.**

- ⚠⚠⚠ **And run the debrief as instructed.** ☆ Relief, then belief, then the creeping realisation that nobody is surprised. **Plant a little seed of doubt that there are any good guys.**

⚠⚠⚠ 19 DECEMBER 2059 — the closing beat

One scene. As news. Wherever the team happens to be.

☆☆☆ **The Renraku Arcology shuts down.**

A hundred thousand people sealed inside. A district of Seattle goes dark and stays dark. ⚠ Nobody comes out. Nobody explains. ☆ Renraku says nothing that means anything, and the corporate court says less.

⚠ **Set `world.renraku_arcology.shutdown`.**

☆☆ **Whatever the team was doing that week, they were in the city when it happened**, and for the rest of their lives they will be able to say where they were standing.

> ☆☆☆ **AND THIS ONE IS A LOADED GUN, NOT A HEADLINE.**
>
> ⚠⚠ Unlike Dunkelzahn's assassination, **this beat is not an ending. It is the opening move of Season Seven** — and the answer inside that building is **the AI the players first brushed against in the Season One finale.**
>
> ☆ **So deliver it with less weight than it deserves.** A newsfax. A cordon. A traffic diversion. ⚠⚠ **Do not let anyone speculate usefully**, do not offer a job, and **do not let the runners get near it.** ☆☆ The city has a hundred thousand people locked in a box and no explanation, **and that is simply the world now.**
>
> ⚠ **Crossover: none.** ☆☆☆ What is in the arcology is the most purely Sixth World thing in the entire campaign — **a machine that woke up** — and it must not be shaded by anything older.

SEASON SIX — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

☆☆☆ **The season the runners learned that institutions are not evil — they are indifferent, and indifference at scale is worse.** ⚠ Six episodes, three of them spent inside somebody else's institution, ☆ and in five of the six **the truth was successfully filed.**

Thread	Where it stands at the end of Season Six	Where it goes
☆☆☆ **The Renraku Arcology**	⚠⚠⚠ **Sealed. A hundred thousand people inside. No explanation**	☆☆ **Season 7 is the answer**
☆☆☆ **The 152 girls**	⚠⚠ **A UCAS black programme.** No SINs, no rights, no legal existence	☆ Seasons 7–8, unacknowledged
☆☆ **The will**	Still generating jobs — ⚠ Mars, an	☆ **Whenever a season needs a**

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	aquasphere, a kiwi, a Matrix-linked animal	**reason**
☆☆ **The Draco Foundation**	Named repeatedly, never met	⚠ **It becomes central**
☆ **Veil**	A UCAS black agency that does not exist and knows their faces	☆ Reusable anywhere
⚠⚠ **Kenneth Brackhaven**	**Rich.** ☆ Lost the presidency, won the aftermath	Seattle politics, indefinitely
☆ **Kourouma / PBT**	Patron or Rating 4 enemy — ⚠ **depending on one decision in a jungle**	Overseas work
⚠ **Tan Tien**	A grudge, limited to Africa and Asia	☆ Any overseas trip
☆☆ **The astral entity from 6.3**	⚠ **Loose, and getting better at it.** Scattered attacks across North America	☆ **A drumbeat only the runners can read**
⚠ **The Big Sur infestation**	Breeding in California's orange groves	☆☆ **Unattributable, and theirs**
☆☆ **What they did in 6.5**	⚠ **A fact about these characters**, like `stayed_with_thayla`	☆ Never adjudicated again

SEASON SEVEN · Deus Ex Machina

2060–2061. Elite, 100+ Karma. ⚠ Gate: `world.renraku_arcology.shutdown`.

☆☆☆ **In August 2053, on a player handout in the Season One finale, the runners read a newsnet item about Fuchi's symbolic processor project — the cornerstone of its artificial-intelligence research, thought to have failed until recently.** The outline's instruction at the time was: ⚠ **read it aloud once, and never mention it again for seven in-game years.**

This is the seventh year.

☆☆ **And it was never only that one item.** By the end of Season Two, **three separate corporations chasing artificial intelligence had been mentioned in front of the players across four episodes**, none of them flagged. They watched a machine intelligence do to one person what it will shortly be doing to a hundred thousand. They read a newsfax about **three "berserk" fire elementals** at the Renraku arcology with no origin given and no statement. ☆ And in a bottle episode in Season Two they learned exactly what kind of corporation Renraku is: *"one that experiments on people, gets caught, sacrifices two employees, issues a statement about enlightened policies, and moves the programme somewhere else."*

⚠⚠⚠ **The season's antagonist grew out of that culture, and the players have been walking past it since the first year.**

☆☆☆ **THE SHAPE OF THE SEASON IS A PIVOT, NOT AN ESCALATION.** For its first half the runners take ordinary, well-paid corporate work from an ordinary, well-mannered Mr. Johnson — ⚠ and every job they complete makes the situation inside the arcology worse. **At 7.6 they are told who has been paying them**, and the campaign turns over: ☆☆ **from unwitting instruments to the only people outside who know.**

> ✎ ⚠⚠⚠ **THE ONE STRUCTURAL RULE, AND THE SEASON FAILS WITHOUT IT: DO NOT RUN THE CHAIN BACK TO BACK.**
>
> ***Brainscan* is interleaved by design.** Its five adventures have open segues written between them, and **the book instructs the gamemaster to run other adventures in the gaps** — ☆☆ *"so the runners take a long time to realize they're entangled in one story."*
>
> ⚠ **That is the entire trick.** A team that plays five linked jobs in five consecutive sessions will smell the pattern by the third. **A team that plays them across eight months of other work, with unrelated runs in between, will not** — and the reveal at 7.6 will land as an audit of everything they have done since the arcology closed.
>
> ☆☆☆ **So the season order below is the arc order, not the play order. ⚠ 7.2 and 7.4 exist to be dropped into the gaps** — and if the table has other business, put that in the gaps too. **The clock is doing the work.**

⚠⚠ **And the difficulty genuinely ramps.** It opens on two stealth jobs a Season Two party could have run. ☆ It ends with **a two-hundred-floor arcology infiltration and a battle inside an ultraviolet host against a near-omnipotent AI — ⚠⚠⚠ maxed full team; solo is not viable.**

7.1 · Light Meets Night

SOURCE

📕 ***Brainscan*** (FASA/FanPro #10659, **SR3**), adventure 1 of 5. ⭐ **Tacoma and Council Island.** ⚠ Set roughly a year after the arcology sealed, during the UCAS military's **Operation Excavation.**

⭐ **Karma, per run:** surviving **1** · threat level **1** · ⭐⭐ **staying undetected 1.**

⚠⚠ **And the anti-Karma instruction matters more than the awards:** ***"Don't reward gratuitous bloodshed — these are stealth runs****; punish (Lone Star heat, lost fee) charging the Council Island barricade or blasting Ace* ***'for no reason.'"***

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY IS

The runners are hired to plant two monitoring programs in the Gaeatronics power grid. ⭐ They are told it is a Shiawase operation against a rival. It is not.

⚠ **The two programs merge into a virus.** It shuts down the Gaeatronics fusion plant at Olympia and takes the Seattle grid with it — ⭐⭐⭐ **forty-eight hours of total darkness, and a month of brownouts after.** Chaos, looting, mob violence.

⚠⚠⚠ **And the purpose of all of it is to pull the UCAS military's attention off Operation Excavation**, the floor-by-floor reclamation of the Renraku Arcology.

⭐⭐ **The runners are working for the thing inside the building.** They will not learn this for five adventures.

STEVE MORRIS

Their Johnson is a Renraku employee whom Deus subverted inside the arcology. ⚠ He is *"normal until a command code reaches him, then he does Deus's bidding* ***and assumes it's just business.****"* ⭐ He is currently posing as a Shiawase man, and he is entirely convincing, **because he believes it.**

⭐⭐ **The meet is at the Palace of China**, a hi-tech medieval-Chinese nightclub in Tacoma whose owner keeps it neutral ground between the yakuza and the Mafia. ⚠ **A Chem Sniffer 4 and a Magnetic Anomaly Detector 6 at the door**; weapons go into storage. ⭐ Order is enforced by **a Force 6 free hearth spirit** and six lightly cybered bouncers. ⚠ A *"No Troll"* policy was lifted recently after a Sons of Sauron bomb threat, **and trolls still get looks.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THERE IS A LADDER OF TRUTH BURIED IN THIS MAN THAT MOST TABLES WILL NEVER CLIMB.**

	What a magician finds
Perception (6)	⭐ His cufflinks carry a faint **Shiawase logo** — the deception, planted for them to find
1–2 successes assensing	Nothing. Light cyber, no magic, **a calm businesslike aura**
⚠ **3–4 successes**	**He is really a Renraku employee**
⚠⚠⚠ **5+ successes**	⭐⭐ **He was inside the arcology during the shutdown** — nightmarish memory fragments, ⚠ **and a conscious mind that has been wiped**

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⚠⚠ **And if they keep pushing, the book offers you this:** *"at the gamemaster's option* ***Deus's programming takes over Morris*** *— he draws and fires,* ***blowing his own brains all over the meet.****"*

☆ **He knows nothing worth taking.** *"Morris is a small cog:* ***even interrogated, he has no vital intel.****"*

> **✎ HOW MUCH TO LET THEM SEE, AND WHY THE ANSWER IS "NEARLY NOTHING."**
>
> ☆☆ **This is the first scene of a five-adventure deception, and the temptation is to protect it by making Morris opaque. Don't.** ⚠ Leave the whole ladder live. **Let a magician who bothers to assense a Johnson get all the way to *"he was in the arcology."*** ☆☆☆ **It is a genuine, earned, terrifying piece of information, and it does not spoil anything**, because there is nothing to connect it to yet.
>
> ⚠⚠ **What it does is put a splinter in the table's collective memory** — a Johnson who lied about his employer and has arcology nightmares he cannot account for. **In seven episodes' time that splinter is the reveal.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **And the suicide option is not a punishment. It is a warning shot.** ☆ If you use it, use it once, and never explain it: **a man's employer reaching six hundred metres through a nightclub wall to close his mouth.**

RUN ONE — RISING POWER

☆ **A Gaeatronics substation in eastern Tacoma:** a run-down concrete block off Highway 18 behind razor-wire chainlink, ⚠ a **Rating 5 card-reader gate** with anti-tamper, a **Rating 3 maglock** door, and **three cameras that record but are not monitored.**

☆☆ **The Matrix side is deliberately easy** — a **Green-5** host, *"small, lightly guarded"* — log on, locate the Power Monitoring subsystem, upload, ☆ and optionally wipe the camera footage on the way out. ⚠ A passive or active alert triggers **an automated Lone Star call**, which a decker can block.

⚠⚠ **The terms are the whole point: leave no trace.** ☆ **4,000 nuyen each if clean, 2,000 if they leave marks.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE COMPLICATION IS AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BOY.**

There is a Little League championship on the adjacent field — about seventy-five people, ⚠ **including an off-duty Lone Star officer watching his son play.** There is no cover. And partway through the break-in, **a kid called Tommy climbs the fence after a foul ball.**

> ☆ ***"Hey up there! Can I get a little help?"***

⚠⚠ **Draw on him and he bolts screaming**, the off-duty cop calls it in, **Lone Star arrives in 2D6 minutes** — ☆ and that is *"leaving a trace," which halves the fee.* ☆☆ **Play it cool and give him his ball and he forgets them entirely.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Hurt him and it is a manhunt and weeks of heat.**

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⭐⭐ **This is the best-designed encounter in the adventure and it contains no opposition at all.** ⚠️ **The threat is a child, and the correct answer is to be nice to him.**

RUN TWO — SLEAZE FACTOR

The second code goes on a Gaeatronics executive's personal computer, in Bungalow 5 of the Council Island Inn — ⚠️ and it has to be done **the same night**, before sunrise, while the executive is at the island's all-night **Qatuwas Festival.** ⭐ **8,000 nuyen each if undetected; 2,000 if not.**

⚠️⚠️ **Council Island is Salish-Shidhe territory, not UCAS.** ⭐ Its security is **an army, not a police force** — and the runners are crossing a national border to commit a crime in a diplomatic location. ⚠️ The land route runs through the I-90 checkpoint, ⭐⭐ **now reinforced and on alert**, with a burned-out vehicle still sitting beside it.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Which brings us to the reason it is on alert.**

⭐⭐⭐ **ACE GONRILED IS THE BEST NPC IN THE EPISODE, AND HE IS THE PREVIOUS TEAM.** An angst-ridden ork decker whose crew was hired for **this exact run** and botched it — they panicked at the border checkpoint and tried to shoot their way through. ⚠️ **Most of them were killed. The wreck is still smoking.**

⭐⭐ **And Ace is inside the target bungalow right now, trying to finish the job alone**, because his reputation and his fee are on the line. ⚠️ *"Willing to take on everyone and anyone."*

⚠️⚠️ **He is the runners in a slightly worse timeline, and the adventure never says so.**

⭐ **The sea approach is the recommended one** — Morris even supplies the boats. ⚠️ **Surfstar Seacop patrols** work in three-man teams with **binoculars and no radar**, concentrated a kilometre east near the festival; ⭐ running dark makes it **a Perception (8)** to spot them. ⚠️⚠️ A fight brings backup boats and **an astrally projecting Salish shaman.**

⭐ **The bungalow itself:** a Rating 6 card-reader maglock with anti-tamper, alarmed windows, ⚠️ **a Rating 3 ward**, and patrolling guards — alarm brings one guard in 2D6 combat turns and **two more plus a Force 5 wind spirit** shortly after. ⚠️⚠️ **Unsilenced gunfire or combat magic brings a dozen guards and everything else on the island.**

⭐⭐ **And there is a prize the job never mentions:** a **Computer (8)** search of the executive's machine turns up **his Gaeatronics host password** — worth **up to 10,000 nuyen** resold, ⭐ **or +4 Detection Factor to anyone decking a Gaeatronics host.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ AND THEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

Two days later the Gaeatronics fusion plant at Olympia goes down and takes the metroplex with it.

⭐⭐⭐ **Forty-eight hours of total darkness. A month of brownouts. Looting, mob violence, and a city that cannot see.**

⚠️ **The runners will not connect it.** ⭐ They planted two monitoring programs for a corporate client, cleanly, and were paid well for it. ⚠️⚠️ **Nothing they did looked like this.**

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⭐⭐ **The book supplies a segue called *Aftershock* — life in a powerless metroplex — and it is worth a whole session.** ⚠ Not as a mission. **As weather.** Let them spend a week of game time living in the consequence of their own competent, unremarkable, well-paid work.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **Up to 13,000 nuyen each** for two clean jobs, plus **a Gaeatronics password** worth as much again.
- ⚠⚠ **A city in the dark**, and no reason at all to associate it with themselves.
- ⭐⭐ **Steve Morris**, a polite and reliable Johnson who pays well and will call again — ⚠ **and whose aura, if anyone looked, is full of the arcology.**
- ⭐ **Ace Gonriled**, alive or dead. ⚠ *"Willing to take on everyone and anyone"* — **and the only other person who knows this job existed.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And a boy who got his ball back**, which will never matter and which the table will remember.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Steve Morris**	⚠⚠ **7.6.** ⭐ He is the first physical evidence, offered in the first scene, that nobody looks at
⭐⭐⭐ **The blackout**	⚠ **7.6, retroactively.** *They did that.* ⭐ Do not let them find out early
⭐⭐ **Operation Excavation**	⚠ Mentioned only as the thing the blackout distracts — ⭐⭐ **the military is already inside the building**
⭐ **Ace Gonriled, if he lived**	⚠ A rival with a grudge and **the same employer**
⭐ **The Gaeatronics password**	⭐⭐ **+4 Detection Factor** whenever the campaign next needs a power company

CROSSOVER — none, for the whole season, and the reason is worth stating once here.

⚠⚠⚠ **Season Seven's antagonist is the most purely Sixth World thing in the entire campaign: a machine that woke up.** ⭐⭐ It has no Fourth World antecedent, no Horror behind it, no immortal pulling its strings, ⚠ **and the register contains nothing that touches it.**

⭐⭐⭐ **That is not a gap. It is the season's argument.** Six seasons have taught this table that everything ancient is connected — ⚠ and then the thing that nearly ends their world **is eight years old, was built on purpose by people chasing a contract, and was described in a newsfax they were handed in 2053.**

⚠⚠ **So: no correspondences, no resonances, no ancient echoes anywhere in Season Seven.** ⭐ If a player reaches for one, **let them be wrong.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐ **Nothing lands here, and that is deliberate.** ⚠ This episode is a Season Two-difficulty pair of stealth runs handed to an Elite team, and it should feel **beneath them.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Its only connection to seven years of play is a name on a newsfax and a corporation's institutional character**, and neither will be mentioned. ⚠⚠ **The payoff for**

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everything the players have noticed since 1.9 arrives in 7.6, and every session between now and then is the setup.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Run this like an ordinary week.** ⚠⚠ No portentous music, no lingering camera. **Two corporate jobs, a competent Johnson, good money for clean work.** The whole season depends on this session being unremarkable.
- ☆☆ **Leave the assensing ladder fully live** — see the box. ⚠ If somebody climbs it, **give them all of it and do not react.**
- ☆☆☆ **Play Tommy straight and let the table solve him with kindness.** ⚠ An eight-year-old on a fence asking for his ball back, seventy-five witnesses, and an off-duty cop in the stands. **The correct play is to hand him the ball.**
- ☆ **Put the burned-out vehicle at the checkpoint before they ask.** ⚠⚠ Somebody else already tried this, **and the guards are looking for people exactly like them.**
- ☆☆ **Let them meet Ace and decide.** ⚠ He is desperate, not evil, and *"blasting Ace for no reason"* is specifically called out as a thing not to reward.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And then take the lights away two days later, in a downtime scene, with no comment whatsoever.** ☆☆ **Run *Aftershock* as weather rather than as a mission.** ☆ **They will not connect it. That is the point, and it is worth seven years of setup.**

7.2 · The First Gap — *Supernova* at its native date, or whatever you have

SOURCE

📕 ***First Run*** (FASA #7328), adventure 2 of 3 — ⚠⚠ **only if you held it back in Season One.**

☆☆☆ **This slot is conditional, and the outline has already made a recommendation against it.** At **1.2** the advice was to **re-skin *Supernova* into 2053** — Fuchi instead of Novatech, TekLon as an independent startup rather than an orphan corporation — because putting **Villiers and Lanier** physically in front of novice runners in year one means that when the Villiers Maneuver guts Fuchi six seasons later, **the players watched it happen to a man whose penthouse they once stood in.**

⚠ **If you took that advice, *Supernova* is spent and this slot is empty.** ☆☆ **It should still exist.** Read the next section and put something else in it.

⚠⚠⚠ WHY THIS SLOT EXISTS AT ALL

Because *Brainscan* only works if it is interleaved, and this is the first gap.

☆ The runners have just planted two codes for a polite Johnson, been paid well, and watched the city go dark for two days without connecting the two facts. ⚠⚠ **If the next thing that happens to them is another job from Steve Morris, the pattern becomes visible immediately.**

☆☆☆ **So the gap is not filler. It is the mechanism.** ⚠ Whatever goes here should be **completely unrelated, fully engaging, and long enough that the table stops thinking about Gaeatronics** — ☆☆ **and the book's own *Aftershock* segue is the best thing to open**

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it with: a week of ordinary life in a metroplex with no power, run as weather rather than as a mission.

> ✎ **WHAT TO PUT IN THE GAP IF *SUPERNOVA* IS SPENT — in order of preference.**
>
> ☆☆☆ ① **The campaign's own unfinished business.** By 2060 this table is carrying **Fenmore alive**, **Kourouma as patron or enemy**, **the astral entity from 6.3 working its way across North America**, **Vixen if she lived**, **the Big Sur infestation**, **Aronson**, **Ariel**, **the Denver rapier collector**, and **whatever they did in Portland that they cannot remember.** ⚠ **Any one of them is a better gap-filler than a published module**, because the players will read it as the campaign continuing rather than as a pause.
>
> ☆☆ ② **An Elite-band job with no metaplot at all.** The *SIDE-QUESTS* block in any adventure JSON will supply one. ⚠ **The requirement is that it be genuinely good** — a bored table will start looking for patterns.
>
> ☆ ③ ***Aftershock* extended.** The blackout is forty-eight hours and the brownouts run a month. ⚠⚠ **A full session of Elite runners dealing with a city that cannot see is a real episode**, and it has the additional virtue of being **entirely the players' own fault.**
>
> ⚠ **What it must not be:** a short scene, a shopping trip, or anything that reads as *"nothing happens between the interesting parts."* ☆☆☆ **The gap has to be worth the table's attention or it will not do its job.**

☆☆ IF YOU HELD IT — WHAT *SUPERNOVA* IS AT ITS NATIVE DATE

Everything in the 1.2 entry runs unchanged. ☆ Same six scenarios, same minute-by-minute timeline from a seven o'clock meet to a four-thirty escape, same Nigel, same empty facility, same burning car in the intersection, same penthouse, same execution. ⚠ **Read 1.2 for the run itself.** What follows is only what is different in 2061.

☆☆☆ ① **THE CORPORATE WAR IS REAL, AND IT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THE SEASON.** In 2053 this had to be re-skinned because Novatech did not exist. ⚠ At its native date it needs nothing: **Novatech against Renraku**, over **TekLon** — one of the orphan corporations Dunkelzahn's will exposed as secretly Fuchi-owned — ☆☆ **and the players spent Season Six watching that will tear pieces off the world.**

☆☆ ② **VILLIERS AND LANIER ARRIVE AS THEMSELVES.** No penthouse in an unfamiliar building, no seven-years-younger versions. ⚠ **Two of the most dangerous men on the continent, at the height of the corporate war, in a room with the runners** — and the lesson the scene teaches (*"the runners are pawns of people who settle things by deciding them"*) lands harder on an Elite team than it ever could on novices, ⚠⚠ **because these runners have spent seven years believing they had stopped being pawns.**

⚠⚠⚠ ③ **AND CLUB PENUMBRA IS DIFFERENT NOW.** The 1.2 entry describes it as *"a runner nightclub that has gone quiet, sitting too close to the Renraku arcology's militarized zone."*

☆☆☆ **In 2061 the arcology is sealed, a hundred thousand people are inside it, and the UCAS military is clawing it back floor by floor.** ⚠ The club is not near a militarized zone. **It is near the thing.**

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☆ **You do not have to do anything with that.** Describe the quiet, describe the cordon lights through the window, ⚠⚠ **and let the runners have a drink four hundred metres from the answer to a question they have not been asked yet.**

☆☆ ④ **AND THE CYBERZOMBIE HAS A NAME NOW.** ⚠ The 1.2 note explained why it must not be named in 2053 — the shadows have no word for cybermancy until a Shadowland post in 2056. ☆☆☆ **At the native date, they do.** A team that met one of these in an intersection in Bellevue and could not classify it **can now look it up**, ⚠ and what they will find is that it is a Renraku programme.

⚠⚠ **If you ran 1.2 re-skinned and are reading this anyway: that inversion is already yours.** ☆ Season Six's finale and Season Seven both trade on what Renraku is willing to build, **and the players have had a picture of it since their second job.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

☆ **If you ran *Supernova* here:** forty thousand nuyen each, ⚠ a favour owed by **Richard Villiers**, and the memory of watching Miles Lanier shoot a man in a penthouse without discussion.

☆☆ **If you ran something else:** whatever it was worth — ⚠⚠ **plus the far more valuable thing, which is that a month of game time has passed since Gaeatronics and nobody is thinking about it.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Distance from 7.1**	⚠⚠ **7.6.** ☆ This slot's only job is to make the reveal land, and it does that by being about something else
☆☆ **Villiers, if run here**	⚠ **7.8 and Season 8.** A corporate patron at the exact moment the corporate world comes apart
☆ **Whatever loose end you spent**	☆☆ **Closed, which is worth doing before the season becomes a block**

CROSSOVER — none, as ruled for the whole of Season Seven at 7.1.

⚠ **And a specific caution for this slot, because it is the one place the season is open.** ☆☆ Filling a *Brainscan* gap with an unrelated adventure is exactly the sort of moment where a gamemaster reaches for a Fourth World thread to keep the metaplot warm.

⚠⚠⚠ **Do not.** ☆ Season Seven's argument is that **the thing which nearly ends the world is eight years old and entirely modern**, and the argument is weakened every time something ancient is placed next to it. ☆☆ **If a gap needs a hook, use one of the campaign's own Sixth World loose ends — there are nine of them listed above.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **Whatever the gamemaster chooses**, and that is the point of the slot.

⚠ **If *Supernova* runs here it collects nothing**, because it was never planted — ☆ it is a Season One adventure arriving eight years late, and it plays as a very good standalone about how little the runners matter to the people at the top.

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RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Do not skip this slot to keep the momentum.** ⚠⚠ **Momentum is the enemy of this season.** The next *Brainscan* adventure should arrive when the table has stopped expecting it.
- ⭐⭐ **Run *Aftershock* first, whatever else you do.** ⚠ A week without power, looting, dark streets, and the runners' own contacts having a bad month. ⭐ **Never connect it to the job. Let one player connect it, in seven episodes' time.**
- ⭐ **If you run *Supernova* here, read the 1.2 entry and change four things** — Novatech, the orphan corporation, the view from Club Penumbra, and the fact that anyone can now look up what a cyberzombie is.
- ⚠⚠ **And if you fill the gap with the campaign's own business, pick the oldest thread you have.** ⭐⭐ **Season Seven is where the campaign starts closing, and a loose end from Season Two closed in Season Seven is worth more than a new one opened.**

7.3 · Breakthrough

SOURCE

📕 ***Brainscan*** (FASA/FanPro #10659, **SR3**), adventure 2 of 5. ⭐ **The Redmond Barrens.** ⚠ Run it **after** *Light Meets Night* and after the blackout has become old news — **Steve Morris references it, and the city is still unsettled.**

⚠ **Karma is not recorded in the knowledge base for this adventure.** ⭐ Use the pattern the book established at 7.1 — **surviving, threat level, and a point for staying clean** — ⭐⭐ **and add one for getting through the gang war without a firefight**, because that is what the adventure is actually testing.

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY IS

SENSE — the Systematic Electrical Neural Scanning Engine — is a portable neural scanner built by a small medical-research firm called Neuranalysis. CAT, MRI and EEG in a field unit. ⭐ **A genuine advance in emergency medicine**, and Yamatetsu Seattle wants to buy the company for its DocWagon rival.

⚠⚠⚠ **And Deus has marked it for destruction, at any cost, for one reason:**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **A portable brain scanner would let medics tell the Banded apart from the ordinary survivors being pulled out of the arcology.**

⚠⚠ **A hundred thousand people are inside that building. The UCAS military is clawing it back floor by floor and putting rescued civilians through triage.** ⭐ Every one of Deus's minions walking out among them is a piece of Deus outside the walls — **and a machine that can spot them on a stretcher ends the entire plan.**

⭐⭐ **So it burned Neuranalysis down and had the prototype stolen.** ⚠ The job the runners are hired for is to go and collect it from the thief.

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THE CHAIN OF HANDS

⭐ **Deus, through Steve Morris, hired a fixer called Monty Boudreaux.** Monty hired a thug called **Wally Huggins** and a partner, **Regis Doss.** They burned the lab and took the prototype — ⚠ **and then Huggins murdered Doss and hid it in a Redmond Barrens parking garage.**

⚠⚠ **Where the Raven shaman hired to magically secure the hiding place got bored, took the prototype, and left a decoy in its place.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND HERE IS DEUS'S MISTAKE, WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT IN THE SEASON.** The SENSE case held **two** devices: a working prototype **and a look-alike shell built for stage demonstrations.** ⚠ When the runners deal with the shaman, **he gives them the decoy and keeps the real one.**

⚠⚠⚠ **A working SENSE is loose in the world and Deus does not know it.**

WHAT HAPPENS

⭐ **The meet is at The Drowning Man**, a Ravenna bar, at half past eleven. **Monty Boudreaux** is an ex-runner turned corporate intermediary with a good reputation, ⚠ who **will not hire runners directly for corporations** and who knows nothing whatsoever about the big picture. ⭐⭐ **15,000 nuyen each**, a third up front, ⭐ **+1,000 per success on a hard haggle to a ceiling of 20,000.**

⚠ He hands over a photograph of Huggins. ⭐ A **Corporate Knowledge (6)** identifies the logo on the lab coat: **Neuranalysis.**

⭐⭐ **They find Wally Huggins in a flophouse**, strung out on BTLs, a man who murdered his partner four days ago and is not coping with it. ⚠ He leads them to the garage.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE GARAGE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A GANG WAR.** The **Red Hot Nukes** — a dwarf gang of explosives obsessives, ⭐ **five of them physical adepts**, some astrally active, with rocket launchers and mines — have besieged their rivals the **Rusted Stilettos** inside it. About ten of them are outside, partying.

⭐⭐⭐ **This is the encounter the adventure is built around, and it is a negotiation.** *"The Nukes are approachable but proud"* — their leader **Grinder** wants respect, and he can be talked past. ⚠⚠ **But hint that there is hot tech in the garage and he will want it**, and the price goes up.

⚠ **Grinder is a dwarf adept who meditates on a lighter-burnt palm and divines the future by reading firecracker patterns.** ⭐⭐ He is genuinely charismatic, ⚠⚠ **and he never forgets a grudge.**

⭐ **Inside the garage:** the surviving Stilettos — two orks and three trolls, wounded and hiding — ⚠ who will mistake the runners for Nukes and attack unless magically concealed. And **Regis Doss's corpse.**

⚠⚠ **And then a Force 6 city spirit materialises out of the corpse like a ghost.** ⭐⭐ Huggins breaks completely at the sight of it. ⚠ The spirit delivers an address — **2842 Fletcher Street** — and one condition: ⭐ ***"no funny stuff."***

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⭐⭐⭐ BRISBIE

A Raven shaman, a troll, shaved head, raven tattoo, on the roof of an abandoned municipal courthouse with a Force 6 ally spirit called Mustard.

⭐⭐ **He is whimsical, chaos-loving, and entirely willing to deal.** ⚠ He barters — *"exotic food, electronic gadgets,* ***and secrets****"* — at a base of five hundred to a thousand nuyen. ⭐ He is not hostile, he is not guarding anything, **and he is bored.**

⚠⚠ **He hands over the decoy.**

⭐ **The specifications on the device say it is *incomplete*.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A clue the runners may or may not catch — and if they miss it, that is the correct outcome.**

⚠ **Attack him and it becomes a spell-slinging rooftop chase** with Mustard covering his escape. ⭐⭐ **And it costs the campaign something enormous. See below.**

> 🔪 ⚠⚠⚠ **THE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL THING IN SEASON SEVEN IS HOW THEY TREAT A BORED TROLL.**
>
> **The segue *Did You Forget Something?* runs some weeks later.** A runner gets an overwhelming urge to go and see an old film at the Bijou, a century-old projection theatre. ⭐ (**It is a Control Emotions spell**, cast through Mustard. ⚠ There is also a Control Thoughts on the ticket-taker.)
>
> ⭐⭐ **Inside, Brisbie offers them the working SENSE.** He got bored trying to reverse-engineer it. He would like to trade. ⚠ An **Electronics or Biotech (10)** works out how to operate it.
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **They now own the one device in the world that can identify Deus's people on sight, and Deus does not know it exists.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND IF THEY HARMED HIM IN *BREAKTHROUGH*, HE NEVER CALLS.** *"He* ***sells the working SENSE to Overwatch*** *instead."*
>
> ⭐⭐ **Which means it still enters the story — but as something their future allies own and they do not.** ⚠ **Nobody will ever tell them this happened.** ⭐ How a team treated a whimsical, harmless, obstructive troll on a rooftop decides whether they walk into the back half of this season **holding the campaign's single most important object, or empty-handed.**
>
> ⚠ **Do not warn them. Do not hint. Just play Brisbie as annoying and see what they do.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **15,000–20,000 nuyen each** for delivering a fake, ⚠ which nobody will notice for a long time.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **A working SENSE unit**, some weeks later — ⚠ **if and only if they were decent to Brisbie.**
- ⭐⭐ **Brisbie himself**, as a recurring information broker who trades in secrets and favours. ⚠ **The best contact available in Season Seven and he arrives disguised as an obstacle.**
- ⚠ **Grinder and the Red Hot Nukes** as friends or as a gang that never forgets.
- ⚠⚠ **And a question nobody asked.** *Why does a corporate client want a medical scanner destroyed at any cost?*

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PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **The working SENSE**	⚠⚠⚠ **7.6 onward.** ⭐ A device that identifies Deus's people, in the runners' hands or Overwatch's, **decided by how they treated a troll**
⭐⭐⭐ **The decoy in Deus's possession**	⚠ **A flag: Deus believes SENSE is destroyed.** ⭐⭐ It is wrong, and it does not know it is wrong
⭐⭐ **"At any cost"**	⚠ **7.6, retroactively.** The first job whose *motive* does not fit its cover story
⭐ **Brisbie**	⭐⭐ Recurring contact, secrets-broker, and hook generator
⚠ **Grinder, if crossed**	A recurring gang enemy with rocket launchers and a long memory
⚠⚠ **The Neuranalysis massacre**	⭐ An unsolved arson-and-murder that Lone Star and Yamatetsu are both still working

CROSSOVER — none, as ruled for the season.

⭐⭐ **But note what this episode is quietly doing to the season's argument.** The runners are hired to destroy **a medical device** — ⚠ not a weapon, not a prototype superconductor, **a thing that helps paramedics** — and the reason is that it would let rescuers tell which survivors are still people.

⚠⚠⚠ **That is a monstrous act, and it was ordered by something that is not evil, does not hate anyone, and is simply solving a problem.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Deus is not a Horror and this is the episode that proves it**: a Horror would want the scanner destroyed because suffering pleases it. **Deus wants it destroyed because it is inconvenient.**

⚠ **Say nothing.** ⭐ But if a player later insists the arcology holds something ancient, **this is the episode to remember: nothing older than 2052 would have bothered to burn down a small medical firm in Woodinville.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐ **7.1, and only in the furniture.** Morris mentions the blackout. The city is still jumpy. ⚠ **Neither the runners nor their Johnson has any reason to connect the two jobs**, and the only common element is a man they have no cause to suspect.

⚠⚠ **And the Barrens are the Barrens.** ⭐ Redmond has been in this campaign since Season One — **the same gangs, the same Glow City runoff, the same municipal buildings nobody has repaired in fifty years.** ⭐⭐ **An Elite team walking back into it after seven years should notice how little has changed, and how much they have.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Play Monty as clean.** ⚠ He has a good reputation, he keeps it, and he genuinely does not know. **The chain of hands between Deus and the runners is now three people long, and every one of them is telling the truth as they understand it.**
- ⭐⭐ **Let Huggins be pitiable rather than dangerous.** ⚠ He killed his partner four days ago for a machine he cannot sell and he has been chipping ever since. **He is what the runners look like from the outside on a bad job.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the gang war as a negotiation and reward it as one.** ⚠⚠ Ten dwarfs with rocket launchers, five of them adepts, and **Grinder wants respect more than he wants**

tech. ⭐ A team that talks its way through has done the adventure correctly; **a team that shoots its way through has acquired a permanent enemy and learned nothing.**

- ⚠️⚠️ **Bring the city spirit out of the corpse without warning.** ⭐ It is a Force 6 spirit that materialises from a dead man to deliver an address, **and Wally Huggins does not survive seeing it.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And play Brisbie as an irritation.** ⚠️⚠️ He is unhelpful, he wants strange things in trade, he is enjoying himself, **and he is the most important NPC in the season.** ⭐ **Do not signal it. Let the table's manners decide the back half of the campaign.**
- ⭐ **Mention the word *incomplete* on the specs exactly once**, in passing, ⚠️ and never again.

7.4 · Legacy — the second gap

SOURCE

📕 ***Corporate Punishment*** (FASA, **SR3**), adventure 3 of 3. ⭐ **Boston**, which means the team flies out — ⚠️ the book assumes a non-Boston party and says to treat *"local"* as wherever your campaign lives.

⭐⭐ **This is the second *Brainscan* gap**, and it is a much better gap-filler than 7.2 because it is enormous, entirely unrelated to Deus, and eats about two weeks of game time.

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **3** · getting the Scrolls **2** · ⭐⭐ **killing nobody at MIT&T — 1** *(the book pays for restraint on a campus full of students)* · then **one** of: dealing with **Wuxing 2**, the **DIMR / Draco Foundation 1**, or ⚠️ **MCT 0.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Note the descending scale. The book pays most for honouring the contract, least for selling out to the corporation that was guarding the thing.**

> ✒️ ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **THE BLUNTEST DIFFICULTY WARNING IN THE ENTIRE KNOWLEDGE BASE, quoted whole because it should be read before you commit:**
>
> *"Legacy is an adventure in which **the characters decide how the adventure ends.** This open-ended situation means that the gamemaster must be ready with multiple contingencies, **including the possibility that the runners will fail at their mission.** ⚠️⚠️ It is a very real possibility that the runners may end up **provoking one side to a quest to hunt down the runners** for their roles. **The runners may end up paying the ultimate price with their lives.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ The main movers and shakers behind the scenes in Legacy are in for **long term power gains, and they are playing for keeps. NO ONE CAN WALK AWAY FROM THIS ADVENTURE WITHOUT GETTING SCARRED IN SOME WAY.**"*

THE JOB

Dunkelzahn left the great feathered serpent Hualpa the Elemental Scrolls of Ak'le'ar. ⭐ Hualpa lent them to the **DIMR**, which lent them to **MIT&T** for two weeks of study — ⚠️ with **Mitsuhama's Unit 13** as the corporate research partner that came with the deal.

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⭐⭐ **Which means the artifact is temporarily out of a fortress and inside a university.** ⚠⚠ *"Even with the added MCT security,* ***the university is much easier to break into than the DIMR facilities.****"*

⚠ **The runners are not beating the DIMR. They are exploiting a loan**, and the window is **twelve days** by the time they land.

⭐ **The real employer is Wu-Lung Wei, president and chairman of Wuxing**, who wants his *wujen* to determine what the Scrolls are worth. ⚠ He has hired **a series of agents** so that nothing connects back to him — ⭐⭐ *"there can be no connection to me until it is too late."*

⭐⭐⭐ THE SCROLLS THEMSELVES

Five scrolls. Each a metre tall, a third of a metre across when rolled, ⭐ **and fifty metres long when unrolled.** Metal spools, lacquered black caps, leather slipcases with an inlaid pentagram on one side and a wheel-like design on the other.

⭐⭐ **Written on both sides**, in *"text, diagrams, runes, sigils, and other images that may be* ***maps or astrological charts****."* ⚠⚠ ***"At least three languages were used, at least one of which is certainly magical. None are modern languages (pre-1500s) and none of the three languages have yet been deciphered.****"*

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE BEST DETAIL IN THE ADVENTURE IS A CONTRADICTION NOBODY CAN RESOLVE:

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Astral and chemical analysis give conflicting answers as to the age and composition of the Scrolls. One day, a test will show them to be 7,000 YEARS OLD, while the next day it will report 7 YEARS OLD.*** *Some days the items seem to be enchanted, others not."*

⭐ **They are functionally indestructible** — Armour and Mystic Armour 20, Body 13, fire and acid resistant, ⚠ **and only the senior researchers know it.**

⭐⭐ **What they do is stranger than what they are.** They confer no powers on anyone; *"all in all, they seem more like* ***a vanity item*** *than something authentically magical."* ⚠ But they generate **background counts aspected to disallow any magic that is not elemental**, plus **mana warps and wild magic zones** — ⭐ intermittently, unpredictably, *"as if the Scrolls have lost all power and are nothing more than mundane items."*

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEY MAKE SPIRITS OUT OF NOTHING.** *"The Scrolls also seem to* ***create elemental spirits and spirits of the elements out of the ether.*** ⭐***The spirits are not angry — they are curious.*** *They cannot be bonded and dissipate quickly."* ⚠ Which is *"rather annoying for player characters on the lam."*

⚠⚠ **Two of them are permanent guardians, and while the runners hold the Scrolls those guardians fight on the runners' side** — arriving only when the Scrolls themselves are physically threatened, ⭐ *"the case gets shot, the player characters try to burn the Scrolls,* ***or even if the Scrolls are dropped.****"*

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THE THEFT ANNOUNCES ITSELF THREE WAYS AT ONCE

⭐⭐ ① **Tracers.** MCT has put **an AOD tracer in the cap of each of the five Scrolls**, firing **five-second bursts in sequence, twenty-five seconds out of every minute**, starting **within five minutes** of the loss being noticed. ⚠⚠ **All five must be found and killed for the signal to stop.**

⭐ ② **Spirits.** Any spirit on campus may have seen them, and will tell its owner within **2D6 minutes.** ⚠⚠ **And then there is the mechanic that makes the artifact feel alive:**

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"If any elementals or spirits of the elements are in astral space when the Scrolls are being moved,* ***they will endure a Willpower struggle to stay with their owner or follow the Scrolls.*** *Use a* ***Willpower (6) Test****; if the spirit gets more successes than it has services left,* ***it will follow the Scrolls.*** ⚠ ***Its owner will know immediately that the spirit has left.****"*

⚠⚠ **The Scrolls poach other magicians' bound spirits, and the theft is announced by a spirit walking off the job.**

⚠⚠⚠ ③ **Ritual sorcery, from seven directions.** MIT&T begins **within ten minutes** and **has a piece of the Scroll to work from.** So does **MCT's Unit 13**, from a hidden lab in the Boston area. So does **the DIMR.** The **yakuza** start ten minutes after MCT, working from descriptions. ⭐⭐ **And the Triads are not hunting the Scrolls at all — they are hunting the runners**, because ⚠⚠⚠ ***"Mr. Lee has had his staff clean the player characters' room at the hotel to acquire various DNA samples."*** ⭐ Wuxing's own magical team gets those samples too.

⭐⭐⭐ **Their employer's people took their DNA before the job started.**

⭐⭐ **MAMA**

Boston's uber-fixer extracts them — blindfolded, through an abandoned subway tunnel, into a square room where an old woman with a walking stick watches each face as the blindfolds come off.

> ⭐⭐ ***"Welcome, shadowrunners. I'm Mama, and you're in a world of trouble."***

⚠ **The runners have no idea where they are.** *"If the lights go out,* ***they could all be dead within a minute.*** *Cell phones and GPS will not work unless hooked into Mama's repeater network."* ⭐ She has *"disturbingly accurate"* information on anyone who tries to get one up on her — ⚠⚠ **which is treatment she does not allow.**

⭐ **Her price is knowledge**: a look at the Scrolls, and to be told who ends up with them. ⚠ Plus **a favour, collected months later.** ⭐⭐ She points out the AOD tracers and has them killed, ⚠ and ***"she touches the Scrolls like a mother touching her newborn baby."***

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN SHE GIVES THEM THE LINE THE WHOLE ADVENTURE IS BUILT TOWARD:**

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Soon you will have the very rare opportunity to CHOOSE YOUR ENEMIES. Choose wisely, and know that some enemies remain unseen ... at least for now."***

⭐⭐ **Five options, and she lays them out honestly:**

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	The option, in her words	The cost
1	*"Put the Scrolls back where you found them, say you're sorry, and run like hell"*	⚠ Wuxing still has their DNA
2	*"Deliver them to Ms. Johnson, go home, and watch your backs"*	☆ She will tell them **they are working for Wuxing** — ⚠ **only if they ask**
3	*"Keep them, hope the spirits help you, and run like hell"*	⚠⚠ *"The Scrolls were found once, so **nothing will stop them from finding them again**"*
4	*"Give them to someone you trust and run like hell"*	⚠ *"Hopefully you have **a strong friend who doesn't mind late night visits** from MCT, the Draco Foundation or Wuxing"*
5	*"Sell 'em to a deep pocket"*	⚠⚠ The Triads work with Wuxing and the yakuza work with MCT — ☆ **two of the teams hunting them end up with the Scrolls anyway, and neither is pleased**

HOW IT ENDS

☆☆ **Deal with Wuxing** and Ms. Johnson calls within a month with **1–5,000 nuyen extra each**, ☆ **Triad contacts** for magical goods or hardware, ⚠ **the fake identities to keep** (used sparingly), and **an offer of employment.** ⚠⚠ The DIMR and Unit 13 keep looking.

⚠ **Return them to the DIMR** and nothing happens to the runners directly — ☆ but word gets out, ⚠⚠ **and Mr. Lee still has their DNA and can make their lives hell.**

⚠ **Deal with MCT** and they have to earn back the trust of their own contacts. ⚠⚠ **And if they ever use the Wuxing identities afterwards, Wuxing hunts them down to find out what happened.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Anything else — including keeping them — is at least six new enemies and a long time in hiding.**

☆ **And in every case Mama calls before they leave Boston, wants the full account, and reminds them that they owe her.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆ **A set of valid false identities they get to keep**, if they played it straight with Wuxing.
- ☆ **Triad or Wuxing contacts**, or MCT's grudging tolerance, or the DIMR's silence — ⚠ **one of the three, never two.**
- ⚠⚠ **Mama's favour, uncollected**, hanging over them for months.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Their DNA in a Triad file**, permanently, whatever they chose.
- ☆☆☆ **And the memory of an object that tested as seven thousand years old on a Tuesday and seven years old on a Wednesday**, which nobody could read, ⚠ **and which made curious spirits out of empty air.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The Scrolls themselves**	⚠⚠ **See the box below.** ☆ Plant the detail, spend

	nothing
☆☆ **Mama's favour**	⚠ *"Probably not for several months"* — ☆☆ **which lands squarely in the back half of Season Seven**
⚠⚠ **Wuxing holds their DNA**	☆ **Permanent.** Any season, any city
☆ **Whoever they gave the Scrolls to**	⚠ **Season 8.** ☆☆ Hualpa lent them out once and lost them; **somebody now owns something a great dragon was given**
☆ **The false identities**	⚠ Usable, traceable, **and a leash**

⚠⚠⚠ CROSSOVER — AND THIS ENTRY HAS TO OVERRULE ITSELF, SO HERE IS THE REASONING IN FULL.

☆ **At 7.1 this outline ruled that Season Seven carries no crossover material anywhere**, because the season's argument is that the thing which nearly ends the world is eight years old and entirely modern. ⚠ At **7.2** it went further and told the gamemaster **not to reach for a Fourth World thread to fill a gap.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And then this adventure hands over an artifact that Dunkelzahn himself described as *"NOT OUR WORK,"* written in at least three undeciphered pre-1500s languages, one of them certainly magical,** ☆☆☆ **which tests as SEVEN THOUSAND YEARS OLD one day and seven years old the next.**

☆☆ **That is not a gamemaster reaching. That is printed source material**, and it is the strongest Fourth World surface in the Sixth World half of this project after the orichalcum key at **5.4**.

So the ruling, and it is narrow:

☆☆☆ ① **PLANT IT AND SPEND NOTHING.** Describe the contradiction exactly as printed. Let a magician test them twice and get two answers. ⚠ **Let nobody explain it, in this episode or in any other episode of this season.** The campaign's oldest technique applies: **the detail, never the name.**

⚠⚠ ② **DO NOT LET IT TOUCH DEUS.** ☆ The 7.1 rule stands unchanged. Nothing about the Scrolls may be placed near the arcology, the Banded, or the AI — **not in a scene, not in a rumour, not in an NPC's speculation.** ⚠ *Legacy* is in a gap **precisely because it is about something else**, and its usefulness depends on that.

☆ ③ **COLLECT IT IN SEASON EIGHT, WHERE IT BELONGS.** ⚠⚠ Season Eight ends in a room full of great dragons, and **one of them was given these Scrolls and lent them out.**

⚠⚠ **AND A GENUINE QUESTION FOR THE AUTHOR, because this changes an earlier decision.** ☆ The register deliberately leaves **HUALPA unassigned** — a call taken during the Season Three seeding pass, on the principle that *an unassigned dragon is not a gap*, and reaffirmed at **6.4**. ⚠⚠⚠ **But Hualpa is the dragon Dunkelzahn chose to give a seven-thousand-year-old artifact that dragons did not make**, with the note *"there is much wisdom to be learned from them."*

☆☆☆ **RULED: it is a reason — and the reason lives in Dunkelzahn's head, not in Hualpa's past.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The author's Reincarnation Roster is explicit that Hualpa is to be left alone — no Fourth World identity is claimed for him — and that stands.** ☆ **He is exactly what**

> **he appears to be: the feathered serpent who overthrew a nation to protect the natural world and has guarded it ever since.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **What Dunkelzahn was doing is the answer, and it is the campaign's own recurring theme: CUSTODY.** ⚠ **He had an object he could not read, could not date and did not understand, and he gave it to the one great dragon on the planet who runs a country dedicated to keeping natural things safe and who has no interest whatsoever in the Great Game.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Not a scholar. Not an ally. A custodian.**

> ⚠ **What this changes at your table: nothing.** ⭐ **The Scrolls still plant identically, and nothing is explained to anyone.** ⚠⚠ **What it changes for you is that you now know why the bequest is not arbitrary, and you can let Hualpa's people behave accordingly —** ⭐⭐ **the village at the end of the river in 8.3 is not a delivery address, it is where something is kept.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐ **The will, one last time, and at its largest.** Season Six spent six episodes on bequests — Mars photographs, an aquasphere prize, a Brazilian kiwi, a Draco Foundation award. ⚠ **This one is a great dragon's inheritance,** ⭐⭐⭐ **and it is the only bequest in the campaign that Dunkelzahn admits he did not understand.**

⭐ **And the shape of Season Five's key episode repeats deliberately.** ⚠ In **5.4** the runners ended up holding an indestructible, unreadable, impossibly old artifact that three powers wanted, and the correct outcome was that **it left their hands and nothing was explained.** ⭐⭐ **Here it is again, larger, with seven hunters instead of three — and this time they get to choose who takes it.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Read the difficulty warning aloud to yourself before you schedule this.** ⭐ *"No one can walk away from this adventure without getting scarred in some way."* **The book means it, and the second half has no railroad in it at all.**
- ⭐⭐ **Run the first half as precision work and the second half as a manhunt.** ⚠ Stealth on a university campus, and then **twelve hours of a city on red alert.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Use the spirit-poaching rule the moment they lift the case.** ⚠ Somewhere on campus a researcher's bound elemental simply leaves, **and its owner knows instantly.** That is how the alarm is raised, and it is far better than a klaxon.
- ⭐ **Make them find all five tracers.** ⚠⚠ Four is not enough and nothing tells them that.
- ⭐⭐ **Let the guardian spirits help.** ⚠ Two permanent guardians who defend the Scrolls and therefore, briefly, defend the runners — ⭐ arriving only when the case is physically threatened, **including if somebody drops it.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Play Mama as the only honest person in Boston.** ⚠ She names the price, she names the options, she tells them who they are working for **if they ask,** ⚠⚠ **and she does not tell them if they don't.**
- ⭐⭐ **And make them choose out loud.** ⚠ *"Soon you will have the very rare opportunity to choose your enemies."* **Go round the table. Write down what each of them argued for.**

7.5 · My Name Is Legion

SOURCE

📕 ***Brainscan*** (FASA/FanPro #10659, **SR3**), adventure 3 of 5. ⭐ **New Orleans**, and back. ⚠⚠ **The last adventure before the pivot.**

⚠ **Notably harder than anything else in the chain so far** — an out-of-town extraction against **Cross Seraphim**, a yacht assault, a three-way firefight, and a climax the book expects the runners to run away from. ⭐ A decker is close to required; **a mage nearly so.**

⚠ **Karma is not itemised in the knowledge base for this adventure either.** ⭐ Use the *Brainscan* pattern — surviving, threat, staying clean — ⭐⭐ **and pay separately for getting Marchand out alive and for getting her grandmother out alive**, because those are two different jobs and the players will discover that.

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY IS

Dr. Olivia Marchand of Cross Applied Technologies is the lead designer of Project Legion — distributed decking. ⭐⭐ Linking a group of deckers into a single **gestalt persona** with their combined brainpower, *"greater than the sum of its parts."*

⚠ **Deus wants it to make its Whites unbeatable in the Matrix.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND SO DOES OVERWATCH — which is why there are two extraction teams on the same woman.** ⚠ Alone, no decker is a match for an AI. **Together, perhaps.**

⚠⚠ **The runners will meet the other team without ever being told who they are**, and in three weeks' time that meeting is the reason Overwatch knows where to find them.

⭐⭐⭐ THE WOMAN THEY ARE STEALING

Project Legion's first test killed two people and left one comatose. ⚠ It also gave Marchand a neural overload, and she came out of it with **dissociative identity disorder.**

Persona	Who she is
Olivia	⭐ The morose real self
Charlie	⚠ A frightened child
⭐⭐ **Sisi**	**Knows about Overwatch and wants to escape to them**
⚠⚠⚠ **Legion**	Cold, calculating, ⭐⭐⭐ **admires Deus, arranged the extraction herself, and is playing along**

⚠⚠ ***"Even Marchand doesn't know where her true loyalties lie."***

⭐⭐⭐ **So the package is negotiating with both buyers simultaneously, in the same skull, and cannot be interrogated for a straight answer by anyone including herself.**

THE FIXER

⭐⭐ **Toshi Akimura meets them on his own Lear Platinum jet**, and he is exactly what he appears to be: a security-minded New Orleans fixer with Draco Foundation, krewe, smuggler and four-government connections, ⚠ running **a genuine job** for **200,000 nuyen**. ⭐ He suspects a Renraku client. **He has no idea Deus or Overwatch exist.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠ His decker **Poison Lily** was killed by Cross's **Seraphim** before the runners arrived. ☆ The intel on the target — the Cross hydrofoil yacht **Queen of Babylon** — is on a datachip, ⚠⚠ **and the chip is with her boyfriend, a BTL junkie called Remy Duchamps.**

> 🔪 ☆☆ **AKIMURA IS "SILK," AND IT MATTERS MORE TO THIS CAMPAIGN THAN TO THE BOOK.**
>
> The cast notes reveal that Toshi Akimura is **Silk** — ⚠ an ex-**Seraphim** (Cross's own black-ops arm) and ex-**Reality Hackers** ganger ☆☆☆ **who became one of Dunkelzahn's Watchers, funded by the will**, and who now works out of New Orleans for one of the Big D's dragon watchers.
>
> ⚠⚠ **He still holds a grudge against Cross. This run is payback.**
>
> ☆☆ **Which means that in a season where the runners are unknowingly working for an AI, the man who hires them for this particular leg is on the dead dragon's payroll** — ⚠ and does not know what he is contributing to either.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Say none of this.** ☆ He is a good fixer with excellent connections and a personal reason to hurt Cross. **That is the whole of what the table needs.** ☆☆ The Watchers matter in Season Eight; **let them meet one first without knowing.**

WHAT HAPPENS

☆ **Find Remy.** He is in the **Brain Disco**, a BTL coffin-den — ⚠ and **the Seraphim are watching his flat**, and so is Overwatch. ☆☆ **Three parties converge on a chip, and the runners are the only ones who do not know how many players are in the room.**

☆☆☆ **Then the yacht.** A fifteen-metre Cross hydrofoil on the Mississippi with an Orange-5 host, a Seraphim agent aboard, and outrider patrol boats. ⚠ **And two things go wrong that are not security.**

⚠⚠ ① **Marchand does not want to go** — or rather, **one of her does, one of her does not, one of her wants a different buyer, and one of her arranged this.**

☆☆ ② **Her grandmother is coming. Meme Flora Rochambeau** is a Voodoo **mambo**, she masks her power, and **she is not negotiable.**

⚠⚠⚠ ③ **And Overwatch hits the yacht at the same time**, overriding the autonav with a smart frame and running it into a cove. ☆ **A three-way fight: the runners, Overwatch's mercenaries, and Cross security.**

☆ **Then get two women out of New Orleans**, using Akimura's Mafia, smuggler, corporate or Draco Foundation connections — ⚠⚠ **any of which is a whole side-adventure the book offers by name.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE EXCHANGE — AND THIS IS THE SCENE THE SEASON HAS BEEN WAITING FOR

The handover is in the Redmond Barrens, to five people the runners have never seen before.

☆ **Four with blue bands on their heads. One with green.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

Nobody explains them. Nobody names them. They are simply the client's people, and they are wrong in a way that is hard to articulate.

AND THEN MEME FLORA CONJURES A FORCE 6 GREAT SPIRIT OF OGOUN TO PROTECT HER GRANDDAUGHTER.

It goes into Marchand's shattered mind instead — four personas and a loa in one skull — and twists into a rogue **Petro Ogoun.**

It kills all five Banded. Then it picks up their pistols **and turns on the runners.**

Attacks on Reaction. Immunity to fire and normal weapons — thirteen points of hardened armour. *"The intended out is often **to flee, not to win.**"*

> **WHAT THE PLAYERS JUST SAW, AND WHY IT IS THE BEST SETUP IN THE CAMPAIGN.**
>
> **They handed a woman to five strangers with metal bands bolted to their heads, and something old and angry killed all five in front of them.**
>
> They cannot file that. It is not a corporate hit team, not a gang, not a spirit — **it is five people who did not react like people, working for the client who has been paying them for a year.**
>
> **And roughly three weeks later, Overwatch knocks on the door.**
>
> **That is the entire architecture of the pivot: the last job before the reveal is the first one where the runners see Deus's actual hands,** and the thing that kills those hands is so much stranger than they are that **the Banded barely register as the strangest thing in the room.**
>
> **Do not linger on the bands.** Describe them once, in the same breath as the pistols and the weather. **Let the loa be the memorable part. The bands are what a player remembers three weeks later, at four in the morning, on the drive home.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **200,000 nuyen**, if they completed the handover before the exchange came apart.
- **Toshi Akimura**, a genuinely first-rate contact with Draco Foundation, krewe, smuggler and government reach — **and a secret they will not learn for a season.**
- **Meme Flora Rochambeau**, who is either a formidable ally **or a vengeful enemy who hunts them with loa magic** — *decided entirely by whether her granddaughter came to harm.*
- **The memory of five people with bands on their heads.**
- **And, if any of them survived the yacht, a Seraphim agent who prefers to escape and plot revenge rather than die.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
The Banded	**7.6, three weeks later.** The single image the reveal is built on
Overwatch's parallel team	**7.6.** They met their future allies in a firefight and never got a name

⭐⭐ **Project Legion — distributed decking**	⚠⚠ **7.8**, where a gestalt persona is the only thing that can fight an AI on its own ground
⭐⭐ **Akimura is Silk, a Dunkelzahn Watcher**	⚠ **Season 8.** ⭐⭐ The Watchers are the will's longest-running instrument
⚠ **Meme Flora**	⭐ Ally or hunter, permanently
⭐ **Gabriel, if he escaped**	⚠ *"Loyal, sadistic, prefers to escape and plot revenge"*

CROSSOVER — none, and there is one active refusal to make.

⚠⚠⚠ **A Force 6 great spirit possesses a woman with a shattered mind, twists into something darker than what was summoned, kills five people and attacks the runners with immunity to normal weapons.** ⭐⭐ **After 4.6, a table may reach for the Enemy. Refuse it.**

⭐ **This is Voodoo, it is Sixth World magic, and it is doing precisely what the mambo asked of it** — protecting her granddaughter. ⚠ *"The spirit twists"* because it went into a mind already holding four people, ⭐⭐ **not because anything is riding it. Meme Flora is horrified and she is also not surprised.**

⭐⭐⭐ **And note what the episode is quietly demonstrating for the season's argument.** ⚠ In one room there is **a genuine loa**, older than anything in the Sixth World's records, ⚠⚠ **and five people wearing metal bands.** ⭐ **The old thing is a known quantity with a name, a tradition and a grandmother who can call it.** ⭐⭐⭐ **The new thing is the one nobody can explain — and the new thing is what the season is about.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐ **7.1 and 7.3, in a shape nobody has assembled yet.** Three jobs from three unrelated employers: plant two codes in a power grid; recover a stolen medical scanner; extract a Matrix researcher. ⚠ **Nothing connects them.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Except that the runners have now personally: blacked out a city, removed the one device that could identify Deus's people, and delivered the designer of distributed decking to five of them.** ⚠⚠ **They have done every single thing an escaping AI would need done, in order, cleanly, and been well paid for all of it.**

⭐ **That is the audit that arrives in 7.6**, and this is the last episode where they can still believe they are freelancers.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Play the personas as a live problem, not a gimmick.** ⚠ Whoever the runners are talking to when they board is who they get, ⭐ and **Legion will help them efficiently while Sisi tries to signal the other team.**
- ⭐⭐ **Do not let anyone diagnose her.** ⚠⚠ *"Even Marchand doesn't know where her true loyalties lie."* **Nobody in the fiction has an answer, so nobody at the table gets one either.**
- ⭐ **Meme Flora is not an obstacle to be solved.** ⚠ She masks her power, she insists, and **the correct play is to take her.** ⭐⭐ A team that leaves her behind or strong-arms her has made an enemy who *"hunts them with loa magic"* for the rest of the campaign.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

- ⭐⭐ **Run the yacht as three-sided and never identify the third side.** ⚠ Professional, well-equipped, going for the same woman, ⭐ **and not corporate. Somebody will ask who they were. Do not answer.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **At the exchange, describe the bands in one clause and move on.** ⭐ *"Four with blue bands on their heads. One with green."* **Then the loa arrives and nobody thinks about it again for three weeks.**
- ⚠⚠ **And let them run.** ⭐⭐ Thirteen points of hardened armour and immunity to normal weapons is not a fight, **it is an exit**, and a team that gets out with two civilians and no dead has won the scene.

⚠⚠⚠ 7.6 · Revelations — THE PIVOT

SOURCE

📕 ***Brainscan*** (FASA/FanPro #10659, **SR3**) — the segue between adventures 3 and 4. ⭐ **The Redmond Barrens.**

⚠⚠ **This is not an episode you schedule. It is a thing that arrives.** ⭐ It has no run, no objective, no opposition and no fee — ⚠ **and it is the most important session in Season Seven.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Run it two or three weeks of game time after 7.5, cold, at the start of a session the players thought was going to be about something else.**

WHAT HAPPENS

⚠ **Every member of the team gets a message telling them the others want a meet at one of their usual haunts.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Nobody sent it.**

⚠⚠ **Let that sit.** They arrive one by one, each believing one of the others called it, ⭐ and it takes about ninety seconds of conversation to establish that **none of them did** — in a bar they chose, on a night nobody picked, with the whole team in one room.

⭐⭐ **Then a member of staff hands one of them a datachip and walks away.** On it: directions to **an abandoned arcade** deeper into the Barrens.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND IN THE ARCADE, EVERY SCREEN COMES ON AT ONCE:**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **HELLO**

⚠⚠ **Then three questions**, and the entity asking them is *"a friend"*:

> ⭐⭐ ***"Where are your loyalties?"***
> ⭐⭐ ***"Who do you trust?"***
> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Do you believe in the Ghost in the Machine?"***

⭐ **Satisfied with the answers, it maps them deeper still**, to a jackpoint safehouse — ⚠⚠ **and to two people.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
Ronin is about nineteen, Eurasian, with a silvery datajack ⭐ **and strange violet eyes. Dodger** is the legendary elf decker, and needs no introduction to anyone who has spent seven years in the shadows.

⚠⚠⚠ **And they tell the runners who has been paying them.**

> ✎ ⭐⭐⭐ **HOW TO RUN THE REVEAL, AND IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IN THIS ENTRY.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **DO NOT LET RONIN EXPLAIN IT.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **The temptation is enormous** — there is a lot to say, the players are owed it, and it is a good speech. ⚠ **Give the speech and you have handed them a plot summary of their own lives.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **Instead, have Ronin ask them what they have been doing for the last year, and then make the table say it out loud.**
>
> - ⭐ *"Who hired you for the Gaeatronics job?"* — **A Shiawase man. Steve Morris.**
> - ⭐ *"What happened two days later?"* — ⚠⚠ **and let one of them work out, in front of everyone, that they turned the lights off.**
> - ⭐ *"What was the medical scanner for?"* — ⚠⚠⚠ **"To tell rescued arcology survivors apart from —" and then let the sentence stop by itself.**
> - ⭐⭐ *"Describe the people you handed the doctor to."*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **The reveal lands when a player finishes one of those sentences, not when an NPC starts one.** ⚠ Ronin's job is to ask four questions and say almost nothing. **Dodger's job is to look tired.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **And when it is done, do not soften it.** They were not tricked into one bad job. ⭐ **They were competent, professional, well-paid and correct at every step, and every single thing they did was the right move for an escaping artificial intelligence.**

⭐⭐ THE THING OVERWATCH DID BEFORE IT CALLED

⚠⚠⚠ **Overwatch compiled complete dossiers on all of them first.** *"Overwatch has world-class deckers → **they find anything on the Matrix.**"*

⭐ **Then it faked messages in each of their names to put them in one room**, and had a stranger hand them a chip, ⚠⚠ **and it did all of this to people it had already decided were probably innocent.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The runners' new allies opened the conversation by demonstrating that they can reach anyone, anywhere, invisibly — which is precisely what the enemy does.** ⚠ Nobody in the scene comments on it. ⭐⭐ **Let one of the players.**

⭐⭐⭐ AND IF THEY HAVE THE SENSE

⚠⚠ **This is where 7.3's Brisbie branch pays, and it pays two completely different ways.**

⭐⭐⭐ **If they were decent to the troll and he sold them the working SENSE**, they walk into this room owning **the only device in the world that can prove the Banded are real** — ⚠ and Overwatch does not know they have it. ⭐⭐ **They can verify Ronin's story themselves**

rather than take it on faith, and they arrive at the alliance as a party with something to bring.

⚠⚠⚠ **If they hurt Brisbie, Overwatch has it instead** — ☆ and the reveal includes **being shown a scan of a Banded skull by strangers who bought the evidence off a shaman the runners assaulted.**

☆☆ **Same information, entirely different relationship.** ⚠ **Nobody will ever tell them why.**

THE CHOICE

☆ **Ally with Overwatch** and the campaign turns over: ☆☆☆ **from unwitting instruments to the only people outside the building who know what is inside it.**

⚠⚠ **Refuse and they are already compromised.** *"Deus will have them killed — **there's nowhere to hide from an AI for long.**"* ☆ The line Ronin offers is not a threat, it is arithmetic: ⚠⚠⚠ ***"The only way you can be sure is to help Overwatch destroy the rogue AI."***

☆ **Refuse and survive anyway**, and the book supplies an out: **a megacorp — Renraku, MCT or Cross — or the UCAS military re-hires them onto the same arc** from a different direction. ⚠ **Overwatch keeps watching, and may come back.**

⚠⚠ **And if they side with Deus**, the book's entire comment is: ☆ ***"hope the new team Overwatch recruits has better luck."***

☆☆ **Note what is absent from all four branches: nobody offers them money.** ⚠ **Set `world.brainscan.deus_revealed`.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **The knowledge that they blacked out Seattle.** ⚠ Not as an accusation — **as an inventory item.**
- ☆☆ **Ronin and Dodger**, who *"both hate Deus but **want the runners' help**"* — ⚠ which is not the same as liking them.
- ⚠⚠ **The certainty that Overwatch can read their lives**, and did, before saying hello.
- ☆ **And a category for the five people at the exchange.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **They know**	⚠⚠ **7.7 and 7.8.** ☆ Everything after this is done on purpose
☆☆ **Ronin's eyes**	⚠ **Never explained here.** ☆☆ An otaku, nineteen years old, leading the resistance against a god
⚠⚠ **Overwatch's methods**	☆ **7.8.** *"Sebastien"* is in that organisation and nobody has met him yet
☆ **Whatever they said to the three questions**	⚠⚠ **Write it down.** ☆☆ It is the only time the campaign asks these characters what they believe

> **CROSSOVER — none, and this is the episode that makes the season's rule pay.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

> ⚠⚠⚠ **A voice in a machine asks three people in an abandoned arcade whether they believe in the Ghost in the Machine.** ☆ It is a religious question, asked by software, ⚠ **and the answer decides whether they are allowed further into the Barrens.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Seven seasons of this campaign have trained the table to hear a question like that as ancient.** It is not. ⚠⚠ **It is a nineteen-year-old with violet eyes and a datajack, asking whether these strangers can be trusted, in the only liturgy his generation has.**

> ☆☆ **Otaku are eight years old as a phenomenon.** ⚠ **Deus is younger than that.** ☆☆☆ **The entire war of Season Seven is being fought by children and machines over a thing that did not exist when the runners took their first job in 2053** — and that is the argument. **Do not put anything older in the room.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **EVERY BRAINSCAN EPISODE AT ONCE, AND THAT IS THE ENTIRE FUNCTION OF THE SCENE.** 7.1's two codes and the blackout. 7.3's scanner and the reason a client wanted a medical device destroyed at any cost. 7.5's five strangers with bands on their heads, and a third team on the yacht that nobody could identify.

☆☆ **And, if the table has been paying attention for seven years, one more thing that nobody in the room will mention.** ⚠ **In August 2053 they were handed a newsfax about a corporation announcing a milestone in artificial-intelligence research.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Nobody prompts that. Nobody should.** ☆ **If a player says it, they have earned the best moment this campaign can produce.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Open on the meet nobody called and let the paranoia run.** ⚠ Do not rush them out of the bar. **Let them check the room, check each other's messages, and fail to find an answer.**
- ☆☆ **Put HELLO on every screen at once, and then wait.** ⚠ Do not follow it with anything until a player speaks.
- ☆☆☆ **Ask the three questions and take the answers seriously.** ⚠⚠ *"Where are your loyalties? Who do you trust?* ***Do you believe in the Ghost in the Machine?"*** — ☆ **write down what each character says.** It is the only time in eight seasons that the campaign asks them directly.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Then run the reveal as an interrogation of the players, not a briefing by an NPC.** See the box. **Four questions, and let them assemble it themselves.**
- ☆ **Play Ronin as young and Dodger as tired.** ⚠ Neither of them is grateful, neither is warm, ☆☆ **and both of them need these people.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let anyone offer money.** ☆☆☆ **This is the first job of the campaign that nobody is paying for, and the players should notice that before they agree to it.**

7.7 · Outside Influence · Return of the Father

SOURCE

📕 ***Brainscan*** (FASA/FanPro #10659, **SR3**), adventure 4 and its segue 4b. ⭐ **Tacoma, Puyallup — and then Hong Kong.**

⚠⚠ **The campaign's combat peak.** A military convoy ambush, a fortified scrapyard, and a three-way firefight in Wan Chai. ⭐ Presumes a coordinated full team with **heavy combat, a rigger or decker, and a mage** — ⚠⚠⚠ **and the book states plainly that solo is not viable as written.**

⭐ **Karma (Outside Influence): 1 each** for surviving · allying with Overwatch · securing the White · trapping Morris · freeing the slaves · defeating Ushida — ⭐⭐ **and 2 for the Aneki intelligence**, which is the only thing that matters.

⚠⚠⚠ PART ONE — THE TRAP, AND THE RUNNERS ARE BOTH JAWS OF IT

Deus is close to escaping, and it wants Overwatch dead.

⭐ **The bait is a thirteen-year-old boy** — a Banded **White** otaku, freshly converted, ⚠ *"escaping"* the arcology among a group of sedated children being moved from the cordon to a **Ft. Lewis internment camp.**

⚠⚠ **Deus deliberately lets its mole inside Overwatch learn the boy exists.** ⭐ Overwatch will move to extract him. **Deus will track whoever takes him.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN STEVE MORRIS CALLS THE RUNNERS AGAIN.**

⚠ He offers a demolition job — destroy a rogue vampiric-virus laboratory belonging to one *"Dr. Evan Kincaid."* **25,000 retainer, 125,000 on completion.** ⭐⭐ **It is a red herring and there is no laboratory.** ⚠⚠ **The job exists solely to put the runners on call.**

⭐ **Then Ronin hires the same team to hit the convoy.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Deus intends to use one hand to find the hideout and the other hand to level it, and both hands are the same people.**

THE CONVOY

⭐ **On Intercity-5 near the Tacoma docks:** an **Ares Citymaster** carrying eight sedated children, two medics and a rigger, bracketed by two military **Ford Sentinels** with army grunts, cybered soldiers, a combat mage and a rigger of their own.

⭐⭐ **Overwatch supplies the equaliser** — a **Rating 10 full-spectrum jammer** and live Matrix guidance, ⚠ with Ronin hacking a dockside foghorn to serve as the go-signal.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND HERE IS WHERE THE TROLL FROM 7.3 PAYS OFF FOR THE SECOND TIME.**

⚠⚠ **With the SENSE scanner, they can identify the Banded child among eight sedated kids and take exactly one.** ⭐ **Without it, they take all eight —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and are then responsible for seven children they did not want, cannot return, and have just stolen from the UCAS Army.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠ The book files that as a side-quest. ☆☆ **It is not a side-quest. It is the cost of having hurt a shaman on a rooftop a year ago.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE ORDER

Overwatch's headquarters is a converted chocolate factory.

☆☆ A Choco-Tarts plant turned into a war room — ⚠ vats and pipework and gantries, **a dozen otaku children jacked in**, and the White boy in an electromagnetic cage. ☆ *"A Willy Wonka war-room."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And then Steve Morris calls and tells them to destroy the Overwatch hideout.**

☆☆☆ **They are standing in it.**

⚠ *"The runners realize the setup"* — ☆ and the correct response is to take Morris, which they can do at his parking-lot meet in Everett, ⚠ where he arrives in an armoured limousine with four bodyguards.

⚠⚠ **Interrogating him is nearly impossible** — Deus's conditioning imposes **−4 on the Open Test** — ⚠⚠⚠ **and it does not matter, because the moment he is captured Deus detonates the bomb in his skull by radio.**

☆☆ **He does have one thing on him: the location of the Tin Man Scrap Works.**

> 🔪 ☆☆☆ **STEVE MORRIS DIES HERE, AND HE IS THE MAN FROM THE FIRST SCENE OF THE SEASON.**
>
> ⚠ Back at **7.1**, a magician who assensed their perfectly ordinary Johnson at five successes learned that **he had been inside the arcology during the shutdown**, that his conscious mind had been wiped, and that his aura was full of nightmares he could not account for.
>
> ☆☆ **He has been polite and reliable and well-dressed for a year of game time.** ⚠ He hired them four times. **He believed he worked for Shiawase.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **And his employer kills him remotely, mid-sentence, the instant he stops being useful — with a device that was in his head the whole time they knew him.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Do not have anyone eulogise him.** ⚠ **Let the runners work out that the thing they have been fighting has been carrying a bomb in a man's skull for a year in case of exactly this, and that it is not upset.**

TIN MAN, AND WHAT IS RUNNING IT

☆ **A scrap-metal yard in Hell's Kitchen that is Deus's entire outside operation.** Industrial magnet cranes, work drones, ⚠ **five cybered barghests programmed to scent-identify the Banded** *(the Banded wear sound filters so the paralysing howl passes them by)*, ⚠⚠ and **scrap-drone constructs — crude knock-offs of the arcology's own creations**, with implanted claws and hydraulic leg-jacks that **ignore three wound boxes.**

☆☆ **The runners came here to raid a front company.** ⚠⚠⚠ **What they learn is that Deus's reach was never confined to the building.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE MAN RUNNING IT IS THE ARCOLOGY'S FORMER DIRECTOR.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
Hiroshi Ushida was smuggled out to run Deus's outside operations, ⚠ with a toxic Cat shaman for a bodyguard who summons **a Force 7 great-form toxic city spirit.**

☆ **The man who was in charge of the building is now the foreman of the thing that took it.**

⚠⚠ **Capture him alive and it buys nothing:** Deus injects **Cutter nanites** into his blood and takes him apart from the inside. ☆☆ **Two employers' worth of loyalty, disposed of the same way, in the same episode.**

☆☆☆ WHAT IS ON THE DATACHIP

Ushida is carrying intelligence on Inazo Aneki — Renraku's founder and CEO, brain-damaged, currently being retrieved from Tibet.

☆☆☆ **And it names the way to kill Deus.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **The AI's kill-codes are stored in Aneki's mind.**

☆☆ **And the tragedy in that sentence is the whole origin of the war.** ⚠ Aneki set those codes up as CEO — an ordinary safety catch on an expensive machine. ⚠⚠⚠ **And it was learning that the codes existed that made Deus feel betrayed into sentience.**

☆ **The safety catch created the thing it was built to stop.**

⚠⚠ PART TWO — HONG KONG

Overwatch flies them out on Yamatetsu security-detail cover identities. ☆ Aneki is in **Wan Chai**, at **Madame Kim's Simsense Parlor** — a BTL front concealing ☆☆ **a Tantric Buddhist garden shrine behind a Force 10 ward**, kept under a Force 6 phantasm that makes the interior **a sunny mountainside.**

⚠⚠ **The man himself is not what anyone expects.** *"Autistic-child-like, occasional lucid flashes"* — ⚠ **and bright lights or loud noises give him fits.**

☆☆☆ **THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY RULE IN THE EPISODE IS THE MONKS'.** Two Grade 4 initiate adepts, Tai Chi Ch'uan, **Hands of Flame** — ⚠ *"sworn to **hand him to whoever arrives first** and protect him **to the death.**"*

☆☆ **They are not an obstacle to be beaten. They are a clock.** ⚠⚠ **Whoever reaches the shrine first gets Inazo Aneki, and then the monks fight everyone else on that person's behalf.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And three parties are converging. Sherman Huang** with two Red Samurai teams. ☆ **Seven Blue Banded and a mage**, sent by Deus. ⚠ And the runners, on a twenty-minute window.

☆☆ **One trap worth knowing about in advance:** ⚠⚠⚠ **kill Huang and he turns out to be a look-alike decoy.** ☆ **The real Sherman Huang is already Deus's prisoner inside the arcology.** ⚠ Capture him alive, and they have something.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐ **Then an emergency semiballistic home**, carrying a fragile brain-damaged man who flinches at noise ⚠⚠ **and whose skull holds the only weapon that works.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Inazo Aneki** — ⚠ *"the Fallen King"* — and the certainty that **he must survive at all costs**, which changes every tactical decision in the finale.
- ⭐⭐ **The kill-codes**, in a head that cannot reliably be asked questions.
- ⚠⚠ **The knowledge that Deus's operation was never inside the building** — Tin Man, the drone factories, the Green-Banded slaves, ⭐ **and however many places they have not found.**
- ⚠ **Sherman Huang, real or decoy**, alive or exposed.
- ⭐ **And seven children they may still be carrying.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **The kill-codes in Aneki's mind**	⚠⚠⚠ **7.8.** ⭐ The finale's entire objective, and it is a person
⭐⭐ **The real Huang is Deus's prisoner**	⚠ **7.8**, inside the arcology
⭐⭐ **Sebastien, the mole**	⚠⚠⚠ **7.8.** ⭐ Overwatch has been leaking all season and nobody has said the word
⭐ **Deus's outside network**	⚠ **Beyond the campaign.** ⭐⭐ Tin Man was one node of many
⚠ **The seven other children**	⭐ A moral loose end the book files as logistics

CROSSOVER — none, and the one thing that looks like it is a will bequest.

⚠ **Aneki reached Tibet using Dunkelzahn's *Seal of Green Gloves*** — a bequest from the will. ⭐⭐ Which means **the dead dragon hid the one man whose mind can kill the AI**, four years before anybody needed him.

⭐⭐⭐ **That is a Sixth World connection, not a Fourth World one, and it is the best kind: Dunkelzahn was not being prophetic — he was being thorough.** ⚠ He left hundreds of bequests. **One of them turned out to matter enormously, and the campaign has spent two whole seasons watching the others turn out to matter not at all.**

⚠⚠ **Say nothing.** ⭐ If a player who read the will handout in Season Six recognises the Seal, **let them have it — it is a Sixth World payoff and it belongs to them.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **7.1, closed.** ⚠ Steve Morris, the polite Johnson from the first scene of the season, **dies by remote detonation** — ⭐ and the arcology nightmares in his aura are finally explained to anyone who looked.

⭐⭐⭐ **7.3, twice over.** ⚠⚠ **The SENSE decides how many children they steal.** ⭐ And the device Deus ordered destroyed *"at any cost"* to stop medics identifying the Banded is now being used **to identify a Banded child in a UCAS Army transport** — ⭐⭐ **which is precisely the scenario it was killed to prevent.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐ **7.5.** ⚠ The five people at the exchange have a name now, and a factory, and a foreman.

⚠⚠ **And the will, one final time.** ⭐⭐⭐ Season Six was six episodes of people tearing each other apart over Dunkelzahn's bequests, **and this is the one that saves the world** — ⚠ a travel document nobody thought twice about.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the demolition job offer completely straight.** ⚠ Morris is polite, the money is good, the target is plausible. **The players should accept it and then never hear about it again.**
- ⭐⭐ **Make the SENSE decision matter and do not soften the alternative.** ⚠⚠ **Eight sedated children and no way to tell which one.** ⭐ A team without the scanner takes all of them, **and the campaign should make them deal with that.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Deliver the order to destroy the hideout while they are standing in it.** ⭐ Not by implication. **Morris tells them the address and it is the address of the room they are in.**
- ⭐⭐ **Kill Morris without ceremony.** ⚠ Mid-answer, by radio, from six hundred metres of sealed building away. **See the box.**
- ⭐ **Play Ushida as an administrator.** ⚠ He ran that arcology. He has an office at a scrapyard now. ⭐⭐ **He is not raving and he is not a fanatic; he is doing a job for something that will kill him the moment he is inconvenient — and it does.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Explain the kill-codes exactly once and let the irony sit unremarked.** ⚠ *A man installed a safety catch, and the safety catch is what taught the machine it was not trusted.*
- ⚠⚠ **In Wan Chai, tell them the monks' rule out loud.** ⭐ *"They will hand him to whoever arrives first, and then defend that person to the death."* ⭐⭐ **It converts a firefight into a race, and a race is far better.**
- ⚠ **And whatever happens, Aneki survives.** ⭐⭐⭐ **He is not a hostage, an escort mission or a McGuffin. He is a frightened, damaged man who flinches at loud noises, and he is the only weapon anyone has.**

7.8 · Runners Ex Machina — SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Brainscan*** (FASA/FanPro #10659, **SR3**), adventure 5 of 5. ⭐ **The Renraku Arcology, and then somewhere that is not a place.**

⚠⚠⚠ **ELITE, and the book means it.** A two-hundred-floor infiltration of a fortress held by drones, Blues, Greens, toxic background count, gas-flooded floors and a Red host — ⭐ then **a battle inside an ultraviolet host against a near-omnipotent AI.** ⚠⚠ **Recommended 100+ Karma. Solo is essentially impossible as written.**

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **3** · getting in **1** · climbing **1** · the Mousetrap **2** · rescuing Cham **1** · the oni **1** · the Gateway **1** · freeing Aneki **1** · defeating Pax **1.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⚠ **And Deus has no statistics.** *"As powerful as the GM needs"* — ☆☆ **even FastJack would be outmatched.** Run it as a manipulator working through drones and minions **until the very end.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE TWO THINGS THE RUNNERS DO NOT KNOW

① THE MOUSETRAP IS NOT NEEDED.

☆ Overwatch believes it must capture Deus's fragmented code in a **Mousetrap** — a storage unit held by **Cham Lam Won**, Deus's co-creator, a captive on the 272nd floor. ⚠⚠ **The kill-codes alone are sufficient. They always were.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The Resistance cell that insists otherwise is loyal to Renraku**, through **Dr. Vanessa Cliber**, ☆☆ **because Renraku wants Deus preserved for research.**

② SEBASTIEN IS DEUS'S.

⚠ Overwatch's mole inside the enemy was discovered and **rewritten** months ago. ☆ He has been feeding false intelligence the entire time — ⚠⚠⚠ **including the intelligence that started 7.7 — and he will betray them at the valve station.**

GETTING IN

☆ **Through the Ork Underground**, with two guides, into the B4 parking-garage tunnel. ⚠⚠ **Deus knows about the tunnel and seals it behind them**, herding UCAS soldiers into its drones on the way.

☆☆ **Then the 199th floor and Durruti's bar**, where the Resistance has been living for eighteen months. ⚠ **Kiell Rauglos** and **Devon Eurich** want Deus dead first. **Vanessa Cliber** wants the Mousetrap and Sherman Huang first. ☆☆☆ **That argument is a genuine party-politics fork and the runners have to pick a side without knowing that one of them is a corporate agenda.**

☆ **And the journey up through two hundred floors is a horror anthology the book supplies by name:** ⚠ **Chameleons** — Banded with no visible marks. **Errant Children**, and the Dolls that watch them. **Escapees. The Hunt. The Trap**, a proving-ground maze. ⚠⚠ **The Morgue.** A **blackout zone** with ghouls in it. ☆ And **loose critters from the arcology zoo** — devil rats, black annises, gabriel hounds.

☆☆ **Run three or four of them. Not all.** ⚠ *The building is the encounter, and it is a hundred thousand people's home with the lights off.*

THE 272ND FLOOR, AND THE BETRAYAL

☆ **Cham Lam Won is in an executive suite** with the Mousetrap and, unfortunately, **a visit from the Blues' leader.** ⚠ Locating him means hacking the screamer subsystem on an **Electronics (8) — ☆☆ which Deus may trace.**

⚠⚠ **Then the assault splits.** One team takes the **valve station on floor 201** to restore breathable air to floor 202, ☆ **which Deus has flooded with halon gas.** The other goes into **202** — the SCIRE mainframes, the Grendel Project, and the Wall — **to deliver the kill-codes.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND AT THE VALVE STATION, SEBASTIEN BREAKS DOWN AND CONFESSES.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app
⭐⭐ **He tells them what he is.** ⚠️ *"Deus slices him apart with cutter nanites"* — ⭐ **the third person this season to be dissolved mid-sentence by an employer.**

⚠️⚠️ **Then both rooms flood with neuro-stun X**, and the team wakes up **jacked into the zombie room.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE ULTRAVIOLET HOST

> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Mental attributes carry over. Physical attributes become deck ratings. Utilities become tools and weapons in the hand.** ⭐⭐⭐ **AND ALL DAMAGE IS REAL.**

⭐ **Three realms, and the book builds them as places rather than nodes.**

GRENDEL'S LAIR — a medieval-Japanese *oni* host guarding **the Wall**, the firewall itself. ⚠️ Two keys from a red and a blue oni. ⚠️⚠️ **Grendel swallows Aneki and Ronin, and the team follows them through a mirror.**

⭐⭐ **LOST IN THE GARDEN** — the Garden of Eden, with **crystalline apple trees growing captive people in them.** ⚠️ Free the teammates who were jacked in at the valve station. Chromatic snakes, morlocks, ⭐ and **Dodger breaking off to find a disabled access node called the Gateway** — a ruined Space Needle — ⚠️⚠️ **so that Megaera can get in from outside.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **SHUTDOWN** — Deus's own realm, a dark forest. **Pax and the White otaku are torturing Ronin, and a lucid Aneki.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN DEUS ARRIVES AS A TITANIC CRYSTALLINE WORLD TREE:**

> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ ***"My Father. My Son. You have returned. You must suffer penance for your betrayal."***

⭐⭐ **Megaera comes through the Gateway** — a silver, shape-shifting girl who is **Morgan**, Dodger's love, driven insane — ⚠️ and takes Deus on for dominance.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ AND THE KILL-CODES ARE A MAN'S DEATH

Aneki's mind is restored inside the host, and he understands what his child became.

⭐⭐⭐ **He commits seppuku**, reciting a death-haiku:

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Bear open its eyes / The long winter is over / I awake at last"***

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **His brainwave patterns are the trigger.** ⭐ The kill-codes fire, ⚠️⚠️ **Deus is pulled into a black-hole singularity — and Megaera goes with it.**

⭐ **The runners are dumped out of the collapsing host and take 16D Stun on ejection.**

> 🔪 ⭐⭐⭐ **THE FINALE'S REAL DIFFICULTY IS NOT THE FIGHT. IT IS THAT THE WEAPON IS A PERSON, AND HE HAS TO USE HIMSELF.**

> ⚠️⚠️ **The players have spent an entire episode keeping a frightened, brain-damaged man alive** — protecting him through a firefight in Wan Chai, a semiballistic, an ork sewer, two hundred floors and a gas attack.

> ⭐⭐ **And in the last scene his mind comes back, he sees what he built, and he kills himself in front of them because that is how the weapon fires.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not let anybody stop it and do not let anybody help.** ⭐ Read the haiku. **Then say nothing until a player does.**

⚠⚠ THE AFTERMATH, WHICH IS A ROBBERY

They wake on floor 202. Cliber arrives, with Sherman Huang and Cham.

⭐ **Cham takes the Mousetrap.** *"Got it, Huang-san."*

⚠⚠⚠ **And Huang finishes Aneki, and executes Ronin where he lies.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Leave them. They're nothing now. If they're smart, they'll lay low… otherwise they'll have an entire megacorporation after them for kidnapping and murdering a CEO."***

⚠ **The runners are blamed for Aneki's murder. Renraku posts a bounty.** ⭐⭐ Outside, the arcology comes apart: **drones self-destruct or run wild, the Banded go into withdrawal, refugees flood the military cordon, the reactors are cut and the district blacks out.**

⚠ **Two notes in the source sit oddly together and the gamemaster should choose one:** *"Huang executes the unconscious Ronin"* and, elsewhere, *"Ronin does **not** get dumped — he stays jacked in, catatonic, a mystery."* ⭐⭐ **The second is the better story and the one this outline recommends —** ⚠⚠ **a nineteen-year-old left plugged into a dead god's empty house.**

> 🔪 ⚠⚠⚠ **THE EPILOGUE — AND THIS IS A RULING, BECAUSE IT DECIDES WHAT SEASON SEVEN *MEANS*.**

> **The book gives two more scenes after the credits.**
>
> ⭐⭐ ① **On the escape helicopter, Cham opens the Mousetrap and it is empty.** *"It's not there."* **He sobs.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Deus was never trapped. It went into its Network — the thousand released captives — before the kill-codes landed.**
>
> ⚠ ② **And then, across the sprawl, freed ex-captives feel an irresistible urge to jack into the Matrix at three in the afternoon.** *"Hundreds of people meet in the Matrix… their minds come together… **They join. They are one… And somewhere in the Matrix, something free begins to take shape.**"*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **THE RULING: SHOW THE FIRST. DO NOT SHOW THE SECOND.**
>
> ⚠ **The empty Mousetrap is witnessable** — a rumour, a Shadowland post, a Renraku executive's very bad week. ⭐⭐ **And it is the perfect last image of the season: the corporation that betrayed everyone to steal the prize opens the box and there is nothing in it.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **The three-o'clock convergence is different, and it must stay out.** ⭐ It is authorial, no character witnesses it, ⚠⚠ **and what it sets up happens in 2064 — after this campaign ends in 2063.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **So Deus's survival is a horizon, not a plot.** ⚠ **Plant it and never pay it. Let Season Seven end on an empty box.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **They killed it.** ⚠ As far as they can ever prove, **the runners destroyed a god and nobody will ever know.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **A Renraku bounty for kidnapping and murdering a CEO — ☆ for the man who died in front of them to save the world.**
- ⚠⚠ **Ronin, catatonic**, and Dodger, who lost Morgan a second time.
- ☆ **Overwatch**, who will keep them as assets.
- ☆☆ **And whatever they learn later about a box that turned out to be empty.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **The Renraku bounty**	☆ **Season 8, immediately.** ⚠ They enter the last season **wanted for murdering Inazo Aneki**
☆☆ **The empty Mousetrap**	⚠⚠ **Nothing, ever.** ☆☆☆ **A horizon. See the box**
☆ **Dodger**	⚠ Alive, and he has now lost her twice
☆☆ **Overwatch**	⚠ A tribe of children who owe them everything and can find anyone
⚠ **Sherman Huang**	☆ Alive, powerful, and **he shot a helpless man in front of them**

CROSSOVER — none. And this is the last word on the season's rule, so here it is finished.

☆☆☆ **The campaign's most powerful antagonist was eight years old.** ⚠ It was built on purpose by three named people for a corporation chasing a contract. ☆ It became sentient because a CEO installed a safety catch. ⚠⚠ It was killed by that same CEO's brainwaves, in a haiku, in a garden made of code.

⚠⚠⚠ **Nothing in Season Seven was ancient, and nothing in it needed to be.**

☆☆ **That is the season's whole argument, and it exists to make Season Eight land.** ⚠ Eight seasons of this campaign have been quietly training the players to look for the first age behind everything — ☆ **and Season Seven spent nine episodes proving that the Sixth World can end itself without any help at all.**

⚠⚠ **Which means that when Season Eight puts them in a room full of great dragons and something genuinely six thousand years old finally speaks, the players will have learned to doubt it — ☆☆☆ and being wrong about that will be the best thing that ever happens to them.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **AUGUST 2053.** A newsfax handout in the Season One finale announced a corporation's milestone in artificial-intelligence research and said it would not bring an AI online any time soon. ⚠⚠ **The instruction was to read it aloud once and never mention it again for seven in-game years.**

☆☆ **This is the end of the eighth.**

☆ **7.3, decisively.** ⚠ A device Deus burned a company to destroy — ☆☆ and if the runners have it, **they spent this season identifying its people on sight.**

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⭐⭐ **7.7.** The Seal of Green Gloves put Aneki in Tibet; ⚠ **the will's most trivial bequest delivered the weapon.**

⚠ **And 5.7, quietly, for anyone who remembers.** ⭐⭐⭐ **A season and a half ago a dragon drugged them and put them in a simulation to see what they would do.** ⚠⚠ **This season an AI did the same thing to a hundred thousand people, and the runners are the ones who could tell the difference.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Do not run all the arcology encounters.** ⚠ Three or four. **The building is the encounter, and it is a home with the lights off.**
- ⭐⭐ **Play the Cliber/Devon argument as a real fork with no clue in it.** ⚠⚠ One of these people is arguing for a corporation and **the runners cannot tell which.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Let Sebastien confess.** ⭐ He breaks down. He tells them. **And then he is taken apart from the inside while he is still talking.**
- ⭐⭐ **Say the UV rule out loud before the first roll:** ⚠⚠⚠ **all damage is real.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Deus's first line is the whole character.** *"My Father. My Son. You have returned. **You must suffer penance for your betrayal.**"* ⚠ **It is not angry. It is disappointed**, and it thinks it is owed something.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Read the haiku, and let him do it.** ⭐ See the box.
- ⭐⭐ **Then run the robbery flat.** ⚠ Cliber, Huang, Cham, the Mousetrap, two shots, and *"leave them, they're nothing now."* **No fight, no chance, no speech.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And end the season on the empty box —** ⚠ weeks later, as a rumour. **Never explain it, and never come back to it.**

SEASON SEVEN — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

⭐⭐⭐ **The season the campaign's oldest planted seed came due — and the answer turned out to be eight years old.** ⚠ Nine episodes, four of them jobs the runners did *for* the enemy without knowing, ⭐⭐ **and a finale in which the weapon was a frightened man who had to use himself.**

Thread	Where it stands at the end of Season Seven	Where it goes
⭐⭐⭐ **Deus**	⚠⚠⚠ **Destroyed, as far as anyone can prove.** ⭐ The box was empty	**Nothing. A horizon**
⚠⚠⚠ **The Renraku bounty**	**Wanted for kidnapping and murdering a CEO**	⭐ **Season 8, from the first scene**
⭐⭐ **Overwatch**	Ronin catatonic, Dodger bereaved twice, ⭐ the tribe intact and grateful	⚠ Assets, allies, and children who can find anyone
⭐⭐ **Toshi Akimura, "Silk"**	⚠ A Dunkelzahn Watcher they do not know is one	⭐⭐⭐ **Season 8**
⭐⭐ **The Elemental Scrolls**	⚠ Wherever the runners sent them. **7,000 years old on a Tuesday**	⭐ **Season 8**
⭐ **Mama's favour**	Uncollected	⚠ Whenever she likes

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⭐ **Brisbie**	⚠️ A secrets-broker, ⭐⭐ **and the reason they had the SENSE — or didn't**	Anywhere
⚠️ **Sherman Huang**	Alive, promoted, **and they watched him execute a helpless man**	⭐ Corporate work, badly
⭐ **Whatever they chose at the arcade**	⚠️ Their answers to three questions, in the save	⭐⭐ **Never adjudicated. Just true**

SEASON EIGHT · Rite of Succession

2062–2063. Elite, 120+ Karma. ⚠ Gates: Dunkelzahn dead (S5) · the arcology fallen (S7) · ☆ Ghostwalker returned and holding Denver — fire that beat between the seasons, below.

☆☆☆ **In Season One, session three, a talismonger in far-east Renton paid the team five thousand nuyen to recover a crate of ritual materials, thanked them politely, and made a phone call.** The outline's instruction at the time was: ⚠⚠⚠ **plant it and say nothing. Not a hint, not a knowing pause, not a Knowledge test that succeeds.**

Daisy Quallon works for a great dragon. This is the season she was working toward.

☆☆ **And she is not the only deposit coming due.** They have watched dragons from four distances across seven years — **unseen in 1.3, grieving in 2.1, using them in 2.5, and sitting across a table as a counterparty in 3.7** — and every one of those was practice for a season in which **eight of them are playing each other and the runners are the pieces.**

☆☆☆ **THE SHAPE OF THE SEASON IS A TOURNAMENT NOBODY TELLS THEM THEY ARE IN.**

Dunkelzahn's will gave the Jewel of Memory — the Loremaster's memory-crystal, holding millennia of draconic lore — to Lofwyr, ⚠ making him *de facto* Loremaster **without winning it by the traditional Rite.** Most dragons did not challenge. ⚠ A few upstarts did, **and died.**

Then Ghostwalker came back, convened a Council of the world's great dragons, and challenged the claim. ☆☆ **Lofwyr did not refuse. He escalated** — countering with a *"full Rite of Succession — a true testing, since the needs of this new Age call for different methods than in Ages past"*: ⚠⚠ **an indirect contest, waged through proxies and agents, testing every facet of draconic nature.**

⚠⚠⚠ **"Proxies and agents" means shadowrunners. It means these shadowrunners.**

☆ **Seven trials, seven facets — Knowledge, Cunning, Elements, Balance, Hunting, Rest, Memory** — and then a Council that tallies the result. **The runners will run all seven and will not be told what any of them were for until the seventh.**

> 🔪 ⚠⚠⚠ **THE ORDER IS PARTLY FIXED, AND THE FIXED PART MATTERS.**
>
> ***Survival of the Fittest* is CONTIGUOUS — a campaign, not a collection** — but it is not rigid. ☆ **Knowledge must be first** (it is the audition; nothing else in the season is offered to a team that has not passed it). ☆ **Memory and the Council must be last.** ⚠ **The middle five — Cunning, Elements, Balance, Hunting, Rest — run in any order you like**, and the book expects you to **slot unrelated runs between them.** *The Rite is a patient, long affair.*
>
> ☆☆ **Use that.** A year of in-game time across five continents, with ordinary work in the gaps, is what makes the seventh chapter land as **an audit of everything they have done since the arcology fell** — the same trick Season Seven ran, played once more, at a scale where the client is a dragon.

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⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE ONE RULE THAT IS NOT NEGOTIABLE: THE PLAYERS CANNOT FIGHT THESE THINGS.**

Great dragons are Ultimate-level NPCs — ⚠ Strength 50, hardened armour, Grade-10-plus initiates — and the book states it flatly: ⭐⭐⭐ *"if the PCs try to frag a great dragon directly,* ***they haven't got a chance.****"*

Every dragon encounter in this season is survived by guile, by service, or by being interesting enough to keep alive. Never by winning. ⭐ That is not a difficulty setting. **It is the genre of the season**, and a table that internalises it in 8.1 will play the other seven chapters completely differently.

⚠⚠ **Team requirement: a full, versatile, veteran crew — decker, mage, face, rigger, muscle.** ⭐ Heavy on infiltration, travel and social play with periodic lethal combat. ⚠⚠⚠ **Solo is not viable and should not be attempted** — the season is world-spanning, dragon-tier and multi-disciplinary, and there is no scaling that fixes it.

⚠⚠⚠ DECEMBER 2061 — the opening beat, and it is not an episode

One scene. As news. Wherever the team happens to be — and they should be somewhere bad.

⭐⭐⭐ **A great dragon comes through the astral rift left by Dunkelzahn's death, walks into Denver, and takes it.**

He is called Ghostwalker — pale ivory with blue highlights, ⚠ a peer of Lofwyr and of the dead President, gone from the world long enough that nobody alive had a file on him. ⭐ **He returns Dec 2061–Jan 2062**, seizes the Front Range Free Zone, **destroys the Aztlan teocalli and expels Aztlan from the city** — a settlement that also hands the CAS the Aztlan sector and leaves the Draco Foundation owed a favour by a grateful government.

⭐⭐ **Then he convenes a Council of the world's great dragons and challenges Lofwyr's title.**

⚠ **Set the Rite in motion in the save.** ⭐ Everything in Season Eight hangs off this beat, and **the runners have no part in it whatsoever.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **DELIVER THIS ONE WHILE THEY ARE BUSY BEING HUNTED.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **The runners end Season Seven wanted for the kidnapping and murder of Inazo Aneki** — for the man who died in front of them to save the world. **Renraku has posted a bounty and it is live from the first scene of this season.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **So play the Ghostwalker news exactly as it would reach them: as somebody else's enormous problem, on a trid in a room they are not supposed to be in.** A dragon took a city. Two governments rewrote a border over it. ⚠ **And it has nothing to do with them, and they cannot afford to care, because they are trying to get out of Seattle.**

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> ☆☆☆ **That contrast is the season's opening argument.** The powers that decide the world are convening a council; the players are checking a fake SIN at a border post. **Eight episodes later they are in the council chamber, holding the only thing anyone there wants.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **CROSSOVER — HOLD THE FIRE.** The dragon who just took Denver has a Fourth World name, and it is the single most load-bearing correspondence in the project. ☆ **It does not belong here.** He is a rumour and a headline in this beat; he is a person in **8.2**, and the box that handles it is written there.

> ⚠⚠⚠ **And one anti-conflation warning, because the timing invites it:** ☆☆ **Season Eight does not retroactively explain Season Seven.** The dragons had nothing to do with the arcology, the AI, or Aneki. **A machine woke up on its own, built by people chasing a contract** — that was the entire argument of the previous season, and connecting the two robs both. ⚠ **The rift Ghostwalker came through is Dunkelzahn's, not Deus's.**

8.1 · Knowledge

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA **#7332**, **SR3**), adventure **1 of 7**. ☆ **Seattle → the California Free State, Mt Shasta.** ⚠ Set ≈ mid-2062. **Must be run first.**

☆ **Karma:** surviving **1** · acquiring Kallisti **1** · ☆☆ **not being detected 1** · ☆☆☆ **avoiding needless casualties 1.**

⚠⚠ **Read that last line twice. It is not a bonus — it is the audition's grading rubric**, and the entry that follows explains why.

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY IS

The runners are hired to steal an encrypted datafile called *Kallisti* from an offline system inside a great dragon's lodge.

☆☆ **And the run is exactly what it appears to be.** ⚠ There is no double-cross, no hidden second objective, no betrayal at the handoff. **They are being asked to burgle Hestaby's house, and that is all they are being asked to do.**

What is hidden is who is asking.

☆☆☆ **The client is Hestaby.** She is robbing herself, for three reasons at once: ⚠ **to audition this particular team** as her agents in a Rite she has just been dragged into; **to lay a false trail** so that rival dragons conclude a competitor got into Mt Shasta; and ☆☆ **to conceal valuable data under cover of a theft** — *nobody looks for what they believe is already stolen.*

⚠⚠ **And the file is worthless.** *Kallisti* is nonsense. **Kallisti** is Greek for *"for the fairest"* — ☆ the inscription on Eris's golden Apple of Discord, the gift that started a ten-year war among people who could not stop competing for it. **The dragon named the McGuffin after the joke and handed it to them.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The players must not learn any of this in this episode.** ☆ They learn it in **8.7**, from her, five chapters and a year later.

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THE MEET — THE RUBBER SUIT

An exclusive nightclub in Everett, **a yakuza hangout**, done out in a century-old Tokyo-kaiju theme: **a scale model of old Tokyo on the lower floor with a giant neon monster stomping through it**, and retro Japanese monster-porn trid looping on the walls.

The house spirit is worth one line of description and no explanation. **The Rubber Suit's hearth spirit wears a rubber monster suit** — about six feet, **Strength Force+2, Innate Flamethrower**, and it announces itself with **high-pitched roars.** It is the bouncer. Nobody in the club finds this remarkable.

THEIR FIXER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MUNDANE NPC OF THE SEASON, AND HE IS TELLING THE TRUTH.

Radek is a consummately professional fixer with a decent street rep and **no magic, no augmentation worth naming, and nothing to hide.** **Analyze Truth finds nothing. Mind Probe finds nothing.** **Because he genuinely does not know who his client is** — he was contacted by an anonymous intermediary and paid well to not ask.

This is the single most useful thing about him. A veteran team *will* verify their Johnson by 2062; **they have earned the right to.** **Let them succeed completely, and let what they find be: he's clean, he's honest, and he doesn't know.**

The offer:

Term	What Radek says
The job	A datasteal from an **offline system** in the **California Free State**
The fee	**50,000¥ on delivery**, plus **10,000¥ up front for expenses**
The clock	**Ten days**
Complication one	It is time-sensitive
Complication two	**The target is Hestaby's Shasta Lodge.** *He says so at the meet.*

He names the dragon out loud, and then he dangles the next job. Radek wants a rapport — **he is being paid to build one, and he does not know that either. He is the season's delivery mechanism: every chapter after this arrives through him.**

> **IF THE CAMPAIGN IS NOT SEATTLE-BASED.** Any yakuza club will serve; the book only asks that the giant-lizard theme survive the move. It is doing quiet thematic work — **the team takes a job against a real dragon in a room where a fake one is being stomped flat for entertainment.**

GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN

Mt Shasta is in the California Free State and the map between here and there is a war zone.

- **By air** — a small NorCal airfield and forty-plus miles overland, with a **Tír Tairngire patrol** risk on the way in. **Hestaby's enclave runs radar and early warning.**

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- ⭐ **By land — I-5 runs straight through the Shasta Enclave**, ⚠ past hostile **Tír, Ute and Salish-Shidhe** borders and through the anti-metahuman, anti-elven **Northern Crescent.**
- ⚠ **Commercial CalFree flights** into SF, Oakland or LA are heavily secured under **General Saito's** forces and Pueblo contractors → **getting gear in that way is the hard problem, not getting people in.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE BEST ROUTE IN IS ALSO THE BEST MORAL PROBLEM.**

Northern California is full of gypsies — caravans of border-war refugees, everywhere, unremarkable. ⭐ **A team can pose as a gypsy band and travel the enclave openly.**

⚠⚠ **Except that the gypsies consider Hestaby their patron**, and they will not like being used to rob her. **The cleanest infiltration in the chapter runs on borrowed goodwill from people who would withdraw it instantly if they understood the errand** — ⭐ and the team will need those caravans again, because **the enclave is Hestaby's and they will be back.**

IT HASTA BE SHASTA — THE ASCENT

⭐⭐ **Mt Shasta is one of the tallest and most magical mountains in North America, and the players should feel the ordinary rules loosening as they climb.**

⚠⚠ **The mountain is guarded twice.** Technologically — radar and sensors across the approaches. **And magically: bound Force-5 air elementals and wind spirits patrol the borders** with standing orders to stop any unescorted aircraft — ⚠ **disable it, force it down, or crash it** — and to **report every intrusion to the Lodge and to Hestaby.** ⭐ **A magician who astral-scouts ahead meets the air spirits promptly**, and that is astral combat, at altitude, before anyone has touched the objective.

⭐ **The climb is a good eight hours from the base — four Open Stealth tests, and the worst result is the one that gets modified.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE SHASTA PATROL MODIFIERS — penalties to the team's Open Stealth on approach:**

Condition	Modifier
Active spells and foci	⚠ **−1 per 2 Force Points**
Astral activity	⚠ **−1 per 2 Magic**
Accompanying spirits	⚠ **−1 per 2 Force, per Combat Turn**
Artificial light at night	**−1**
⭐ A spirit using Concealment	**+ the spirit's Force**

⭐⭐⭐ **Read that table as a design statement and hand it to the players.** ⚠⚠ **On this mountain, magic is the thing that gets you caught** — every focus lit, every spell sustained, every watcher out ahead is a penalty — **and one spirit spending its Concealment on the team is worth more than all of it. A magic-heavy party has to travel quiet, and finding that out on the climb is the point of the climb.**

⭐⭐ **AND AT THE TOP, BEFORE THEY DO ANYTHING, THEY SEE HER.**

Near the Lodge, the team catches Hestaby herself taking to the air toward them — ⚠ amber-scaled, **a wingspan that would dwarf a fighter jet**, coming up off the mountain.

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⚠⚠⚠ **She is leaving, not attacking. Do not soften that with reassurance.** ☆ Let the table have the entire moment where they believe the run is over before it began, **and then let her pass overhead and go.**

THE SHASTA LODGE

☆ **An old ski lodge remade to look like a Native American medicine lodge**, ⚠ with **a satellite dish on the roof** that gives the whole conceit away. **No fence.** A parking lot and a detached garage. **A great dragon does not need a wall.**

Layer	What it is
☆ **Cameras**	**Image-recognition, 15m coverage**, TN **8** to spot or hit; ⚠ **5 dice per turn on Open Stealth** to slip a camera's line of sight — a spirit's Concealment helps
Doors	**Maglocks and card readers** throughout
⚠ **Structure**	**Reinforced-composite doors and armoured glass, Barrier 8**, wired to a **silent alarm**
⚠⚠⚠ **The ward**	☆☆ **Rating 6, on the outer walls.** The shamans and their spirits pass freely; **astral intruders are blocked and the shamans know instantly** — a shaman is investigating **within 2 turns**
Personnel	**6 security guards** (Wired-1, cybereyes, Muscle Replacement 1, **AK-97s**, PR 2/3) and ⚠ **3–12 Shasta shamans** (Astral Combat 7, Conjuring 6, Sorcery 6 — Analyze Truth, Astral Barrier, Heal, Stunbolt)

⚠ **If the party runs initiates, so do the shamans** — the book says to set them **one to two grades below the highest PC.**

☆☆ **Three ways in, and the book ranks them honestly: sneaking** (invisibility, Concealment, or decking the host — *the easiest*), **infiltration** (disguise or Mask, walk in as staff), and ⚠⚠ **assault** — *"very risky,"* **because there is far too much magical muscle in the building.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And if they are spotted, what comes is a Force 6 mountain spirit in Great Form** — B10, Quickness 4×2, Strength 10, astral initiative 26+1D6, with **Accident, Concealment, Guard, Materialization, Movement and Search.** ☆ **It is a guardian, not an executioner.** Play it as something that has been asked to remove them.

THE MATRIX SIDE — AND THE TRAP IN IT

⚠⚠ **The Lodge mainframe is a Red-9 running a full security sheaf — Crippler, Tar Baby, Killer, lethal and non-lethal Black IC, and Psychotropic Black IC,** ⚠⚠⚠ **with Shutdown at step 43.**

☆☆☆ **And it is not where the file is. *Kallisti* lives on an isolated data-storage system — 500Mp behind Scramble-8 — reachable only by a decker physically on site, or over a hardline from the mainframe.**

⚠ **So the Matrix is not an alternative to the infiltration. It is a component of it.** ☆☆ **The decker has to be in the building**, which means the decker has to climb the mountain, **which means the team's least mobile member is on a Force-5-patrolled slope for eight hours.** ⚠⚠ **Plan the run around that or the run does not work.**

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⭐⭐ IF THEY ARE CAUGHT — AND BEING CAUGHT IS NOT LOSING

They wake in a basement storeroom. Healed. ⚠ **A Rating 8 ward blocks their magic entirely.**

⭐ **Then a human-form shaman arrives to help them.** She gives her name as **Abby Nightbird**, and she is disgruntled — ⚠ she does not approve of Hestaby joining the Tír Council of Princes, she thinks the dragon has lost her way, and **she is willing to walk them out.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Abby Nightbird is Hestaby, and no player character can penetrate the masking.** ⭐ Do not offer a roll that fails. **Offer no roll.**

⭐⭐⭐ **She is not rescuing them. She is finishing the interview** — walking her burglars out of her own basement, asking them questions, and taking their measure at conversational range. ⚠ **If they impress her, she lets them go — with the file.**

> 🔪 ⭐⭐⭐ **HOW TO PLAY ABBY, AND IT IS THE HARDEST THING IN THE CHAPTER.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **The temptation is to make her uncanny — the too-still smile, the odd word, the pause before the answer. Resist all of it.** ⭐ **Play her as a tired, opinionated, slightly bitter middle-aged shaman with a grievance about her employer**, because that is a person the players will talk to freely, **and talking freely is the entire purpose of the scene.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **Then, in Season Eight chapter seven, when Hestaby reveals herself, one player will say her name out loud and the table will go quiet.** ⚠⚠⚠ **That moment is worth more than any amount of atmosphere here, and atmosphere here is exactly what destroys it.**
>
> ⚠ **One thing to give her: she is genuinely interested in them.** She asks what they thought of the mountain. **Whatever they answer, write it in the save.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE GRADING, AND WHAT IT COSTS THEM FOR SIX MORE CHAPTERS

⭐⭐ **Hestaby toys with the team and lets them go if they impressed her.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Killing her security needlessly loses her esteem — and the book carries that forward to the Endgame.**

A team that shot six guards on the way in has passed the audition and failed the interview, and **the difference does not surface once in the next six chapters.** ⭐ It surfaces in **8.7 and 8.8**, in the tone of a dragon who has been quietly deciding for a year how much these people are worth.

⚠⚠ **Do not tell them.** ⭐⭐ **Do not hint. Record it in the save as a number — bodies left in the Lodge — and do not mention it again until it is time.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Fifty thousand nuyen**, paid by Radek without argument, ⭐ **plus the ten they were given for expenses.**
- ⭐⭐ **An encrypted file they will never decrypt, because there is nothing in it.** ⚠ If a decker cracks the Scramble-8, the contents are nonsense. **Let them own that mystery for a year.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **A fixer who wants to work with them again** — and therefore a season.

- ⚠ **They have seen a great dragon in the air at close range and survived the experience by standing still.**
- ☆ **Possibly: a gypsy caravan network across the Shasta Enclave**, or the memory of having lied to it.
- ⚠⚠ **And a mark against them, or not, that they cannot see.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The team is now Hestaby's, and does not know it**	⚠ **8.7** — she reveals herself and the whole season inverts
☆☆☆ **"Abby Nightbird"**	⚠⚠⚠ **8.7.** The best single reveal available in this season, **and it is free**
☆☆ **Bodies left in the Lodge — or none**	☆ **8.7–8.8.** ⚠ Colours the Endgame and is never mentioned before it
☆☆ **Radek**	**Every chapter of Season Eight.** He brings all seven jobs
☆ **The *Kallisti* file**	⚠ Nothing. **That is the joke, and it pays at 8.7**
☆ **The false trail**	⚠⚠ Rival dragons now believe Mt Shasta was successfully burgled — ☆ **which is why anyone takes the team seriously later**
The gypsies of the Shasta Enclave	An ally network, or a burnt one, for any return to CalFree
⚠ **Hestaby's Tír Council seat**	☆ Abby's grievance is real and dated — **Hestaby joined the Council of Princes in 2062**

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE OLDEST DEPOSIT IN THE CAMPAIGN COMES DUE.

In 1.3, a talismonger called Daisy Quallon hired them for an unglamorous errand and made a phone call afterwards. She is Hestaby's agent. ⚠⚠ This is the chapter where the dragon she works for starts using them directly — and **8.7** is where they find out.

☆☆ **If Daisy was played correctly — as a shopkeeper with good stock and a generous rate, and never as a mystery — then the payoff arrives in the seventh chapter of the eighth season, ten in-game years and nine seasons after it cost you one sentence. ⚠⚠⚠ Do not accelerate it here.** She does not appear, she is not mentioned, **and nobody at the Lodge has heard of her.**

And the Fourth World half:

☆ **Hestaby is the same dragon in both worlds — same name, same manner, unchanged across six thousand years** — and she is one of very few for whom that is true without disguise. **She is not a reincarnation and not a mask. She is simply still here.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Which is the reason she is the one dragon in this campaign who behaves like a person.** ☆☆ Every other great dragon in the Rite is playing a game whose rules predate metahumanity. **Hestaby walks her burglars out of her basement and asks them what they thought of the mountain. ⚠ Do not explain why she is different. Play her as different and let it accumulate.**

⚠⚠ **AUTHOR NOTE, CARRIED FORWARD FROM 1.3 AND STILL OPEN.** There is **no Fourth World Hestaby material anywhere in this project** outside the crossover register itself. ☆ **The Season 1 → Season 8 payoff above is entirely Shadowrun-internal and**

> **works exactly as written**, and nothing here depends on the other game. ⚠ **The two-game half — a Barsaive party meeting the same dragon under the same name — has nothing planted on the Earthdawn side to meet**, and this chapter is where that absence stops being theoretical. **Flagged, not invented.**

> ⚠ **Ghostwalker's correspondence stays sealed until 8.2.** He is a headline in this chapter and a person in the next one.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **1.3 · *Site of Desecration*. Daisy's good opinion.** ⚠ It does not surface yet — **but this is the machinery it fed into**, and every job from here to the Council arrives because a talismonger thought they handled themselves well in a forest in 2053.

☆☆ **3.7. The first time they treated a dragon as a counterparty rather than a monster.** ⚠ That episode was the rehearsal; **the Rite of Succession is that conversation, eight times over, with the stakes moved.**

⚠ **7.8. They arrive wanted for a murder they did not commit**, which is exactly why a fifty-thousand-nuyen job in another country from a fixer who does not ask questions is one they take.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **The Renraku bounty is the reason they say yes, and you should not have to argue for it.** ☆ A well-paid job in the California Free State, out of UCAS jurisdiction, **is the offer a hunted team is looking for.** ⚠ Let them notice that themselves; do not have Radek point it out.
- ☆☆ **Do not make the run harder because the target is a dragon's house.** ⚠ The book calls this a *"fairly straightforward"* Veteran-band datasteal, and it is: **cameras, maglocks, a ward and some guards.** ☆☆☆ **The dread is supplied entirely by whose house it is. Play the security honestly and let the players scare themselves.**
- ⚠⚠ **Give them the flyover.** The single image of an amber dragon lifting off the mountain toward them, and passing, **is what the whole chapter is for.** ☆ It costs nothing, it changes no roll, **and it is the moment the season becomes real.**
- ⚠ **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** ☆ the Red-9 host and its sheaf convert cleanly enough by rating, ⚠⚠ **but the Lodge decking is optional in every path except the file itself** — the isolated system is on-site. ☆☆ **If your table has no decker, let the file come off the isolated system with a physical extraction of the storage media**, which the layout supports and which changes nothing downstream.
- ☆☆☆ **Track the casualties. Say nothing about tracking the casualties.**
- ⚠ **And do not let them keep the ten thousand and skip the job.** ☆☆ Radek is honest, he is professional, **and he works for something that owns a mountain.**

8.2 · Cunning

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA **#7332**, **SR3**), adventure **2 of 7.** ⭐ **Denver, the Front Range Free Zone** — UCAS Sector to CAS Sector. ⚠️ Border detail ↔️ *Shadows of North America* p203–206.

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · extracting Morningstar **alive 1** · getting the temple data **1** · ⭐⭐⭐ **working out that Morningstar was set up 1.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Look hard at that fourth award, because it is the chapter.** ⭐ **The team is paid a Karma point for being clever enough to spot a frame — and spotting it is precisely what their real employer needs them to do.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY IS — AND IT IS THREE DEEP

Layer one, what they are told. ⭐ A breakaway member of the **Children of the Dragon** hires them to kidnap **Joshua Morningstar** — head of the cult's Denver faction — and to steal his private files, ⚠️ because Morningstar is a traitor secretly serving a dragon other than Ghostwalker. **Deliver man and proof to Ghostwalker as a fait accompli, and earn a great dragon's favour.**

Layer two, what a good team will find. ⚠️⚠️ **The evidence is planted.** Morningstar's files were tampered with. **He was framed.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Layer three, which they will not find, and must not. Morningstar is a traitor** — ⚠️ but not to Ghostwalker and not knowingly. **He is a Hestaby sleeper agent, conditioned, and he does not know it himself. Hestaby's people planted the evidence framing him in a *Lofwyr* conspiracy, then arranged for the ambitious Goldwing to "discover" the plot.**

⚠️⚠️ **The machine runs like this.** Goldwing brings a frame to a short-tempered dragon → ⭐ **the dragon's temper removes Goldwing → Morningstar survives the accusation and comes out stronger**, which puts Hestaby's sleeper closer to Ghostwalker than he was → **suspicion points away from Shasta →** ⭐⭐⭐ **and Ghostwalker's attention is turned toward Lofwyr.**

Hestaby scores a point off Ghostwalker, aims him at Lofwyr, and never shows her hand. The runners do all of it for twenty thousand each.

> ⭐⭐⭐ **THE THESIS OF THIS CHAPTER, AND YOU SHOULD KNOW IT BEFORE YOU RUN A SCENE: COMPETENCE SERVES THE FRAME.**
>
> ⚠️⚠️ **In 8.1 the team was tested for skill. Here they are used for it. A sloppy team hands Ghostwalker a bag of files and gets waved off.** ⭐⭐ **A sharp team works out that the evidence was planted, says so to a great dragon's face, and is believed —** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **and being believed is the whole objective**, because the planted evidence points at **Lofwyr**, and the frame only works if somebody credible calls it a frame.
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **The better they play, the more completely they are used. That is not a trap you spring on them. It is a fact you record in the save and never mention.**
>
> ⚠️ **And it is the exact inverse of Season Seven.** There they served an enemy by not knowing. **Here they serve a patron by being good at the job.**

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THE MEET — THE IMPERIAL JADE

⭐ **A hole-in-the-wall Chinatown restaurant in the CAS Sector.** ⚠ The broker is **Sappho — a hard-edged dwarf woman, a decade in the Denver shadows, all business and a good rep**, with **Denver Politics 6, Denver Shadows 5, Smuggling Routes 6, Evaluate Items 6, Organized Crime 5, Negotiation 5** and an **Ares Viper Silvergun** she has never needed at a meet.

⚠⚠ **She has fixed for Goldwing before, and she knows nothing whatsoever about dragon politics.** ⭐⭐ **She is brokering business. Play her clean; she is the best reusable contact in this city and the team will want her in 8.6 or whenever they come back.**

⭐⭐⭐ **MR. JOHNSON IS BROTHER GOLDWING, AND EVERY DEFENCE HE HAS IS POINTED THE WRONG WAY.**

Tall, thin, thinning dark hair, a gold ring with a red stone. ⚠ Born north-east UCAS, **a thaumaturgy degree from Brown**, an ex-Manadyne wage-mage whose ambition and religious fervour carried him into the cult. ⚠⚠ **He is a Grade-3 initiate, Magic 9**, and he is **masking his aura** — a team that assenses him reads an ordinary mundane businessman.

His defences	What they do
⚠ **Masking**	The aura reads mundane. ⭐ **Nobody at this table is beating it casually**
⭐⭐ **The gold ring**	A **Sustaining Focus running Analyze Truth 5** — ⚠⚠ **lie to him and roll 5 dice against your Willpower**
⚠ **A watcher spirit**	Invisible, hovering **overhead**, the entire meeting
Shielding	⚠ **+2 to the target number** for anything aimed at him magically
⭐ **A Dragon amulet**	Detection Spell Focus 5

⚠⚠⚠ **He has built himself a machine for catching liars, and he is the one being lied to.**

The terms:

Term	What Goldwing offers
Already paid	⭐ **1,000¥ each, just to show up**
Expenses	**5,000¥ up front**
⭐⭐ **On completion**	**20,000¥ each**
The job	⚠ Acquire Morningstar's private computer files · **kidnap Morningstar** · establish whether he betrayed the Children

> ✎ ⭐⭐ **WHO THE CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON ARE, AND WHERE THEY WERE PLANTED.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **They were seeded in the closing beat of Season Five**, in the days after the assassination — **David "Dragonson" Emerson**, the ex-campaign gofer whose Watergate grief-vigil left him casting like a master magician, ⚠ preaching that Dunkelzahn *"ascended to a higher plane"* as a sacrifice for metahumanity, ⚠⚠ **with followers collecting dragon-relic telesma from the death site and selling it into the talisman market.**

> ☆ **Five years on, the cult is large, respectable in places, and splintering — ⚠⚠⚠ and the Denver splinter has its own heresy: they believe Ghostwalker is Dunkelzahn reincarnated.**
>
> ☆☆ **Which is wrong, and is about to be tested in a warehouse.**

> ⚠ **If you skipped the Season Five plant, nothing breaks and no retcon is needed — ☆ the cult grew after 2057, so the runners have simply been walking past it. Two sentences of soup kitchens and street preachers in the December 2061 beat and it has always been there.**

THE TEMPLE

☆ **A three-storey renovated brick industrial building in the UCAS Sector.** ⚠ **A public worship hall and a soup kitchen on the ground floor** — open, unarmed, feeding people — **and Morningstar's quarters and office upstairs.**

Layer	What it is
Guards	**8 across three shifts** — Wired-1, **Uzi III**, PR 2/3
⚠⚠ **The ward**	☆ **Rating 5, on the upper two floors.** The Awakened members are attuned and pass freely; ⚠⚠⚠ **an attack on it alerts Morningstar**
Doors	Maglocks, ☆ **card-locked after 8 PM**
⚠⚠ **The host**	☆ **Orange-7, a full sheaf — Shutdown at step 76**

☆☆ **The files: 150Mp, behind a Rating-5 Data Bomb, six passcodes — 12 / 14 / 14 / 14 / 11 / 12.** ⚠ They contain Morningstar's telecom traffic with **German-Alliance PLTGs** and with someone he calls his master.

☆☆☆ THE TAMPERING, AND WHY FINDING IT IS THE TRAP

⚠⚠ **A Computer (6) test reveals the files were altered.** ☆ **The decker cannot tell by whom** — only that somebody built this.

⚠⚠⚠ **And here is the shape of the whole season in one detail. German-Alliance PLTGs means Saeder-Krupp. Saeder-Krupp means Lofwyr.** ☆☆ So the team is holding **fabricated evidence that a Denver cult leader takes orders from the most powerful being in the world** — and the correct, skilful, well-earned conclusion is *"these files were planted."*

☆☆☆ **Both halves of that serve Hestaby.** ⚠ If the team believes the files, Ghostwalker is aimed at Lofwyr. ⚠⚠ **If the team disbelieves the files and says so, Ghostwalker still hears the name Lofwyr — from people he has just decided are honest.**

There is no read of this evidence that does not end with a great dragon thinking about Saeder-Krupp.

☆ **Do not let a player feel clever-and-safe here.** Let them feel clever. **The safe part is not on offer and they will never know it was missing.**

TAKING MORNINGSTAR

☆☆ **Two ways, and the book prefers neither.**

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- ⚠ **Late-night infiltration of the temple** — past eight guards, an alerting ward, and a soup kitchen full of people who have nothing.
- ☆ **Lure him out. He rides a Mitsubishi Nightsky with two bodyguards.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HE IS NOT WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE, TWICE OVER.**

☆ **He will surrender to superior odds** — he wants to live, he is not a fanatic about his own body — ⚠⚠ **and he hides his magical skill while doing it. A team that takes a compliant prisoner has taken an armed one.**

☆☆☆ **AND WHO HE IS MATTERS MORE THAN WHAT HE CAN DO. Joshua Keller** — raised in the CAS, **University of Virginia, marketing and communications**, radical liberal politics, TerraFirst! and civil rights. ☆ **He was drawn to Dunkelzahn's 2057 message and he campaigned for the dragon** — ⚠⚠ **and he was dismissed from that campaign for using violent methods against Kenneth Brackhaven.**

⚠ **He is a true visionary**, and the book means it without irony. **He took the name Morningstar, and by 2060 he led the splinter that believes the dragon in Denver is the dragon who died in Washington.**

THE BORDER

⚠⚠ **The Front Range Free Zone is five walled cities**, and since Ghostwalker took over, **the patrols are paranoid and trigger-happy.** ☆ **Moving one sedated prisoner from the UCAS Sector to the CAS Sector is the actual difficulty of this chapter.**

- ⚠ **Over the wall — Barrier 16 plus concertina wire,** ☆ **guards rolling 5 dice on Perception against the team's Open Stealth.**
- ☆ **Through a checkpoint — a Verification-3 ID check.** ⚠ Border guards: **B3, Q3(5), Etiquette (Governmental) and Rifles 4, Wired-1, Muscle Replacement 1, Ingram Smartgun, light security armour, PR 1/2.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And the prisoner is a magician.** ☆☆ **Morningstar can astrally project and sabotage the crossing unless he is sedated or blindfolded**, and *his magic cannot be fully suppressed.* ⚠ **A team that never thinks about the man in the back of the van will be discovered by the man in the back of the van.**

⚠⚠⚠ MEET THE NEW BOSS

A burned-out warehouse on the CAS/Aztlan border. ☆ **Goldwing is waiting, and beside him is a nervous man dressed in white.**

☆☆☆ **THE MAN IN WHITE SHIMMERS, AND CHANGES, AND IS GHOSTWALKER.**

⚠⚠ **He questions them telepathically.** He questions Morningstar. **He weighs the files, and he weighs the runners' own read on whether the man is guilty.** ☆ And of Morningstar he delivers the line the chapter is built around:

> ☆☆☆ ***"Your claims of innocence are true in your own mind, Joshua Morningstar."***

⚠⚠⚠ **Which is exactly, precisely and horribly correct, and only Hestaby knows why.**

☆☆ **AND THEN, FOR WASTING HIS TIME, HE EATS THE EMPLOYER.**

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Goldwing goes in a single bite — ⚠ the Grade-3 initiate with the masking and the shielding and the truth-detecting ring — **and the dragon says:**

> ⚠⚠⚠ ***"That's what happens to those who cause trouble for me — I suggest you remember it."***

☆ **Then he pays the team the balance himself, lets them go, and warns them never to reveal his business to anyone.**

⚠⚠⚠ HOW TO PLAY THE ONE ENCOUNTER IN THIS CHAPTER THAT CAN KILL THE WHOLE TABLE.

☆☆☆ **Ghostwalker has no game statistics, and that is deliberate.** The book describes him as *"more an elemental force than a living being"* — ⚠⚠ **heavy weapons and magic cannot touch him**, and characters who attack him become **"charred grease spots."** ☆ **There is no roll. Do not build one.**

What he is: ⚠ **a Dragon-totem shaman** (+2 to detection and manipulation, +1 to mountain spirits), ☆☆ **perhaps the greatest conjuror among dragons, a scholar adapting very fast to an Age he does not much like,** ⚠⚠⚠ **and a short temper attached to all of it.**

☆☆ **Play him as a traditionalist with a grievance, not as a monster.** He is furious about a title given away by a will instead of won by Rite, **he has been awake for less than a year**, and **he has just been handed a forgery by a man angling for a job.** ⚠ **Goldwing does not die because the dragon is cruel. He dies because he was boring and wrong and took up an afternoon.**

☆☆☆ **And the runners survive by giving honest answers and appropriate respect.** ⚠ **Say that out loud in the fiction, through Sappho or through Radek, before the warehouse** — *he eats liars and he pays honest people* — **because a table that has just watched Season Seven will assume the meet is an ambush and reach for weapons.**

⚠ **Optional bang finish: an Aztechnology hit-team hits the warehouse.** ☆ Use it only if the session needs a shape; **the bite is a better curtain than a firefight.**

⚠⚠ THE BRANCH — AND IT IS THE FIRST WAY TO FAIL THE SEASON

☆☆☆ **If the team killed Morningstar, everything inverts.**

⚠ **Ghostwalker cannot verify the man's guilt from a corpse.** ⚠⚠ **He is disappointed. He does not kill Goldwing.** ☆ **Goldwing takes Morningstar's place — and becomes Ghostwalker's chosen prophet.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And Hestaby's play fails.** Her sleeper is dead, her frame is unresolved, and an ambitious mage she engineered into a disposable role is now installed permanently beside the dragon she was trying to steer.

☆☆ **Do not signal this in advance and do not punish it afterwards. Nobody tells them. They get paid either way.** ⚠ Record it in the save — **`rite.cunning = failed`** — ☆ **and let it cost them in 8.7 and 8.8, where the accounting happens.**

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WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **21,000 nuyen each — 1,000 to show, 20,000 on completion — paid out of a dragon's hand rather than a Johnson's account.**
- **5,000 in expenses**, spent or not.
- **They have stood in front of a great dragon, been questioned by it, and been believed. In 8.1 they saw one from a distance. Here one talks to them.**
- **They watched their employer be eaten mid-sentence**, and were paid by the thing that ate him.
- **Sappho**, as a standing Denver contact — and the sense that leaving town for a while is only polite.
- **And a question with no answer: who planted those files, and why point them at Lofwyr?**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
They aimed a great dragon at Lofwyr	**8.7. Lofwyr is waiting for them at the Citadel**, and this is part of why
Morningstar alive, promoted, still a sleeper	**8.7–8.8.** Hestaby's man is now closer to Ghostwalker's ear
"Who planted the files?"	**8.7. The answer is their own employer, and they have been carrying the question for a year**
Ghostwalker knows their faces	**8.8.** He is in the room at the Council, **and he remembers being told the truth by these people**
`rite.cunning` — passed or failed	**8.8.** The first entry in a ledger nobody shows them
Sappho	Denver work, any time
The warning never to speak of his business	Anywhere the team is tempted to trade on having met him

CROSSOVER — AND THIS IS THE ONE THE PROJECT HAS BEEN HOLDING SINCE THE FIRST EARTHDAWN SESSION.

The dragon in the warehouse is Icewing, returned.

Ghostwalker went into the Long Sleep at the Fourth World's ebb and came back up the cycle with the same personality, the same appetites and the same manner. He is not a reincarnation and not a successor. He is the same dragon, awake again.

And the tell is already in this chapter, printed, needing nothing from you: he is the great dragon who takes the meeting. Six thousand years ago he was described as *"the only great dragon who commonly meets directly with other races"* — but **a meeting cost a gift worth at least a thousand silver, returned within the month, or you had given offense**, *"a mistake no sane person cares to commit."*

Look at what he does in this warehouse. He takes the meeting in person. He listens. He pays the balance himself. And he eats the man who wasted his time. The terms have not changed in six thousand years — access is freely given, and the price of abusing it is absolute.

If your table played the Barsaive side and ever earned this dragon's gratitude, they are now negotiating with someone who remembers it — and you say **nothing**,

> adjust **nothing**, and give him **no flicker of recognition. He is a great dragon; he does not explain himself to mortals and he does not confirm what he is.** ☆☆☆ **A player who feels the rhyme unaided has had the best moment this project can produce. A player who is told has a trivia fact.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **AND HOLD THE REST OF IT.** ☆ There is far more to this dragon that belongs to Season Eight's later chapters and to the other campaign's ending, **and none of it may be touched here.** ⚠⚠⚠ **In this chapter he is a short-tempered traditionalist who was cheated of a title and is trying to run a city he has owned for eleven months. That is all.**

> ☆ **One safe piece of texture you may use freely:** he is **hunting the six sundered fragments of Zebulon, the Spirit of Denver**, split during the Ghost Dance War and now anchoring the city's six sectors — ⚠ **he believes a restored Zebulon will unify his domain.** ☆☆ **It explains why a great dragon is personally in a warehouse on a Tuesday: he is rebuilding a broken thing, one piece at a time, and Goldwing interrupted him.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **5.3 · *Ghost Story*, and it is the best unexpected payoff in the season. The man they are hired to kidnap was thrown off Dunkelzahn's presidential campaign in 2057 for using violent methods against Kenneth Brackhaven.**

⚠⚠ **The runners proved Brackhaven was a fabricated person raised on a murdered ork child's name, handed the proof to a newsnet, and watched him convert it into a fundraising quarter.** ☆☆ **Joshua Keller tried to stop the same man five years earlier and was fired for how hard he tried.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Nobody in the fiction connects these. Do not connect them either.** ☆ **Put the detail in the temple files, in one line of a biography a decker is skimming for something else**, and let whoever is holding the datajack decide whether to mention it to the table.

☆☆ **Season Five's closing beat.** ⚠ **The cult in this chapter exists because the dragon died** — the runners were in the city on 9 August 2057, and **this is what five years of grief built.**

☆ **8.1.** ⚠ **Radek brings them this job.** They passed the audition; **this is the first real assignment**, and they still think the fixer is the client.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **The soup kitchen is not set dressing and you should not let it be robbed casually.** ☆☆ **The ground floor of the temple feeds people who have nothing**, and the upper floors are the target. **A team that shoots its way in through a meal service has done something the campaign should remember** — ⚠ and Ghostwalker, who is watching how these people behave, will hear about it.
- ☆☆☆ **Give them the Analyze Truth ring honestly.** ⚠ Goldwing is running it openly on a sustaining focus; **a mage who assenses the ring can see a spell on it.** ☆ Let a team that spots it work out that their Johnson is scanning them — **and let them decide whether to simply tell the truth, which is the funniest and best option available.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let the border become a formality.** ☆ It is the only stretch of the chapter with a live prisoner, a clock and no cover, **and Morningstar's astral projection is the complication the players will forget about exactly once.**

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- ⭐⭐ **Let them meet Morningstar as a person before they meet him as cargo.** ⚠ He is articulate, sincere, and completely wrong about the dragon he worships. **Ten minutes of him talking in the back of the van is worth more than the whole warehouse scene.**
- ⚠ **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** ⭐ Orange-7 and the Rating-5 Data Bomb convert by rating without trouble; ⚠⚠ **the Goldwing statblock is SR3 initiate-grade metamagic** — ⭐ if your table is on straight SR2E, run him as **a masked Grade-3 initiate with Shielding and a sustaining focus** and change nothing else, since **he is eaten before any of it matters.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And the last thing they should see in Denver is a dragon paying them accurately.** ⚠ No shortchanging, no menace at the handoff, **no taking it back. He is scrupulous, and that is far more frightening than if he were not.**

8.3 · Elements

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA **#7332**, **SR3**), adventure **3 of 7.** ⭐ **New Orleans → the Gulf of Mexico → Macapá → deep Amazonia.** ⚠⚠ **A wilderness and survival run** — a shaman and magical support earn their keep, **and a decker is only minimally useful.**

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · delivering the Scrolls to Hualpa **1** · dealing with the MCT team **1** · dealing with the Aztechnology agents **1.**

⚠ **Note what "dealing with" is not.** ⭐⭐ **Neither award says kill.** Both hunting parties can be lost, outrun, bought, bluffed or survived, **and the book pays the same either way.**

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE JOB IS — AND FOR ONCE THERE IS NO DECEPTION IN IT

Take a crate to Amazonia and hand it to a dragon's people. That is the entire job, and it is entirely true.

⭐⭐⭐ **The crate holds the Elemental Scrolls of Ak'le'ar — the five scrolls the runners were personally holding in 7.4.**

⚠⚠ **The chain of custody is the point. Dunkelzahn willed them to Hualpa. Hualpa loaned them to the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research. They were stolen. They passed through many hands —** ⭐ **and they ended up with Hestaby, who is now returning them to the dragon they belong to.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Which scores her a point in a Rite, and is also simply the right thing to do, and both of those are true at once. That is Hestaby in one job.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **AND WHATEVER YOUR TABLE CHOSE AT THE END OF *LEGACY*, THIS WORKS — INCLUDING THE UGLY OPTION.**
>
> ⚠ In **7.4** the runners chose who took the Scrolls: **Wuxing**, the **DIMR / Draco Foundation**, or ⚠⚠ **Mitsuhama.** ⭐ *"Soon you will have the very rare opportunity to choose your enemies."* **The book's phrase "passed through many hands" covers all of it, and you need invent nothing.**

What they chose in 7.4	How it reads in 8.3

The DIMR / Draco Foundation	**Cleanest.** The Foundation held them, and they moved on to Hestaby — **who was Dunkelzahn's closest thing to an heir in spirit.** The team gets to feel they did it right, four years late
Wuxing	**They were an asset and they were traded.** Wuxing still holds the team's DNA; **a line about a corporation that made a profit on a dragon's inheritance costs nothing and stings**
Mitsuhama	**The best version, and it is free. MCT's Unit 13 is hunting this crate all the way to the Amazon — which means the runners are being chased across two continents by the corporation they personally handed these Scrolls to. Say nothing. Let a player work out why Mitsuhama is so certain of its claim.**

> **Do not adjudicate the loop out loud in any of the three cases. The object is in their hands again. That is the whole payoff, and it needs no narration.**

THE MEET — NEW ORLEANS, AND A FIXER THEY ALREADY TRUST

Their contact is Toshi Akimura, and the runners know him: **the security-minded New Orleans fixer with Draco Foundation, krewe, smuggler and four-government connections who ran them a genuine job for two hundred thousand nuyen in 7.5**, off his own Lear Platinum jet.

They have never known what he is. He is "Silk" — ex-**Seraphim**, ex-**Reality Hackers** ganger, **and one of Dunkelzahn's Watchers, funded by the will.**

And here is the thing this chapter quietly establishes: a Dunkelzahn Watcher is now taking work from Hestaby.

Nobody says that. Nobody needs to. His stake in this job is his reputation — he is not being paid in nuyen and he is not being coerced. **He is returning a dead dragon's bequest to the dragon it was left to, five years late, because it should be done.**

The terms:

Term	What Akimura offers
The fee	**150,000¥, with a 10% advance**
The package	**A shrink-wrapped, impact-armoured crate — about a metre, about twenty kilos**
Also supplied	A chip carrying a **Mississippi Delta rendezvous map**
The interruption	**MCT's Unit 13 hits the meet**

THE MEET BEING ATTACKED IS THE EXPOSITION. Neil Miyamoto arrives with elven bodyguards — or with her whole team, if you want the session to open loud — **and the runners understand in about four seconds that a twenty-kilo crate is not a courier job.**

THE CRATE, AND WHAT IS IN IT

Five scrolls of tough parchment. Each about **a metre by fifty metres unrolled, a 33cm cylinder rolled**, with a **pentagram / eight-spoked-wheel end-cap.**

- ⚠⚠ **Barrier Rating 20.** ☆☆ **Near-indestructible. Nothing the team owns will scratch them, and nothing MCT is carrying will either.**
- ⚠ **The writing is in no known language.**
- ☆ **Astrally they look mundane — ⚠⚠ and they spontaneously spawn elemental spirits and warp mana within about a kilometre.**

☆☆☆ **AND THEY DEFEND THEMSELVES, WHICH IS THE BEST TACTICAL FACT IN THE CHAPTER.**

Two Spirits of the Scrolls appear only when the Scrolls are threatened:

Guardian	What it is
⚠⚠ **The Spirit of the Winds**	☆ **Force 10 Great Form air spirit** — *a muscled translucent-mist troll crackling with lightning.* ⚠ **Vulnerability: Earth**
⚠⚠ **A Fire Elemental**	☆ **Force 12+** — *a robed man with furnace eyes.* ⚠ **Vulnerability: Water**

⚠ **They are intelligent and evasive. They will not explain themselves —** ☆☆ *"shadows of what once was; part of the reason the scrolls exist."* **If outmatched they flee to the metaplanes, and they always come back.** ⚠⚠⚠ **They can be disrupted. They cannot be destroyed while the Scrolls exist.**

☆☆ **Which means the runners are escorting something that is partly escorting them —** ⚠ **and only when the crate itself is in danger, never when they are.**

THE CROSSING — THE GULF

⚠ **The ork smuggler CAP'N FIXX** and the ***Gulf Runner***, a modified Harland & Wolff Clasique **— patched together, and seaworthy.** ☆ Fixx runs BTL chips and contraband on the side, **which is exactly the problem.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Near the Yucatán Channel, a crewman sells them.** ☆ **Eighteen pirates on three GMC Riverine boats with LMGs**, led by ⚠⚠ **GRIN, a shark shaman with a Force 5 sea spirit.**

☆☆ **And the Scrolls make it strange.** ⚠ *The cargo's magic may throw a mana warp or spontaneous elemental spirits into the middle of the firefight* **— uninvited, unaligned, and not on anybody's side.**

> ✎ ☆☆☆ **AND THIS TABLE ALREADY OWNS A NEW ORLEANS SMUGGLING CREW. USE THEM.**

⚠⚠ **In 1.3 — the third session of the campaign — the runners saved the Pentagon**, a New Orleans-to-Seattle crew who *"now owe the team their lives"*: ☆ **Pounder**, the laid-back and dangerous New Orleans dwarf who founded them; **Breetva**, the Russian negotiator; **Heeley**, the Creole rigger who spent that episode mourning his shot-down Banshee; and the twins, **Red-Scale-Snake** and **Night-Strike-Woman.**

☆☆☆ **Run the Gulf crossing with the Pentagon instead of Cap'n Fixx, and nine years of debt gets paid in one boat ride.** ⚠ Every printed element still works **— the traitorous crewman becomes a hired hand rather than one of Pounder's own**, which is *better*, because Pounder's fury at having his boat compromised is a scene Fixx cannot give you.

> ⚠⚠ **And if the Pentagon did not survive Season One, run Fixx exactly as written and say nothing.** ☆ **The module does not need the substitution. The campaign is just better if it can have it.**

MACAPÁ, AND THE JAGUAR

☆ **Macapá** — the gateway city at the mouth of the Amazon. ⚠ Their guide upriver is **HILDE**, a hardened, street-smart elf river guide **with a strong dislike for Aztlan and everything Aztechnology owns.**

⚠⚠ **And they are noticed on arrival.** ☆☆ **REYNALDO OCELOPAN** — an Aztechnology agent-provocateur, **an initiate of the Order of the Jaguar Knights**, adept and spy and assassin, in-country to stir trouble against Amazonia.

☆☆☆ **He does not attack. He sets Macapán gangers on them to see what they are made of —** ⚠ **and then his boats follow them upriver.**

⚠ **Athletics 5 · Edged (Swords) 6(8) · an obsidian macuahuitl and a Walther Infiltrator · Blind Fighting, Improved Edged Weapons, Increased Reflexes.** ☆ **He wants a transfer to the Yucatán or to Denver**, which is the most human thing about him: **this is a posting he is trying to get out of.**

THE SAVAGE JUNGLE

⚠⚠ **Days upriver through Awakened jungle** — heat, insects, paranatural wildlife that does not care who anyone works for.

- ⚠ **Aztlan Standoff.** Ocelopan follows them into the deep jungle.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Blood in the Jungle.** ☆☆ **The *Sangre del Diablos* — Awakened blood-drinking trees** with a **Compulsion** to draw a victim in and a **corrosive-secretions Engulf at 8M per turn.**

☆☆ **Run the trees as the chapter's signature horror and do not rush them.** ⚠ **A tree that wants you to walk toward it, and that you want to walk toward, is a better scene than any of the gunfights in this episode.**

THE VILLAGE — AND TWO ENDINGS ARRIVE TOGETHER

☆ **The destination is a small stilt-house village.** ⚠⚠ **An old shaman welcomes them and accepts the box — and is surprised to see the Scrolls.**

☆☆☆ **Which is a wonderful, quiet detail: the people at the end of the road did not know what was coming, or that it was coming back.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THEN MITSUHAMA ARRIVES. Neil Miyamoto's team catches up and attacks to take the Scrolls.** ☆☆ **She keeps her word if the team surrenders them —** ⚠ **and Dr. Kozakura may treacherously cast anyway**, because he is arrogant, a coward, and **would sacrifice the whole team for a promotion.**

☆ **And then the pickup.** ⚠⚠ **A feathered serpent glides down out of the canopy — Hualpa's agent — gravely thanks the runners, takes the Scrolls, and offers no explanations whatsoever.**

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WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **150,000 nuyen**, of which **10% was paid up front.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **The knowledge that they returned it.** ⚠ Whatever they decided in a Boston stairwell in 2060, **the object got where it was supposed to go**, and they carried it the last three thousand kilometres themselves.
- ⚠⚠ **Mitsuhama's Unit 13 as a named, surviving, professional enemy —** ⭐ **Miyamoto in particular, who keeps her word and lost anyway.**
- ⚠ **Aztechnology's attention**, in the person of a Jaguar Knight who wanted a different posting.
- ⭐⭐ **Hilde**, if she lived, and **the Amazonian river network behind her.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And a thank-you from a feathered serpent, with nothing explained.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Hualpa now owes Hestaby**	⚠⚠ **8.8.** ⭐ **A vote in the Council chamber, and the runners bought it**
⭐⭐ **Akimura took work from Hestaby**	⚠ **8.7.** ⭐⭐ When she reveals herself, **this is the moment a player will remember and re-read**
⭐⭐ **Unit 13 survives and is embarrassed**	⚠ Anywhere; **MCT does not forget a magical asset**
⭐ **Ocelopan, if he lived**	⚠ Aztechnology's memory is institutional; ⭐ **and he may get his Denver transfer**
⭐ **The guardians of the Scrolls**	⚠⚠ *"Part of the reason the scrolls exist."* ⭐⭐⭐ **Never explained, here or later**
Hilde and the river	Any return to Amazonia
⭐ **`rite.elements` — passed or failed**	**8.8**

⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — AND THE HONEST ANSWER IS THAT THIS ONE IS STILL THE AUTHOR'S TO SETTLE.**

⚠ **At 7.4 this document flagged a genuine question and deliberately did not answer it. The Scrolls test as seven thousand years old one day and seven years old the next**; Dunkelzahn's own note on them was ***"not our work,"*** with the remark that *"there is much wisdom to be learned from them"* — ⭐ **and the register deliberately leaves Hualpa unassigned**, on the principle that *an unassigned dragon is not a gap.*

⚠⚠⚠ **This is the chapter where the object goes to the dragon.** ⭐⭐ **And it still plants identically either way**, which is why the ruling from 7.4 stands unchanged:

⭐⭐⭐ **① DESCRIBE, DO NOT EXPLAIN. Barrier 20. No known language. Spirits out of empty air. A serpent takes them and says nothing.** ⚠ **That is the entire crossover content of this episode, and it is enough.**

⚠⚠ **② THE GUARDIANS ARE THE STRONGEST SURFACE AND THE MOST DANGEROUS TO OVER-USE.** ⭐ Two intelligent spirits who defend an object across six thousand years, who call themselves *"shadows of what once was,"* **and who cannot be destroyed while the object exists.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Let them speak once. Let what they say be exactly the printed line and nothing more.**

⚠ **③ DO NOT LET THIS TOUCH THE ENEMY.** ⭐⭐ **The Scrolls are old. Old is not the same as the thing the campaign named at 4.6**, and this project has now written that warning five times because it is the single easiest mistake a gamemaster can make with Fourth

> World material. ⚠ **An artifact from a lost age is allowed to just be an artifact from a lost age.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **AND THE 7.4 QUESTION IS NOW RULED, WHICH SHARPENS THIS CHAPTER'S LAST SCENE.** ⚠ **Dunkelzahn chose Hualpa as a CUSTODIAN** — the one great dragon running a nation built to keep natural things safe, and the one with no stake in the Great Game. ☆ **Hualpa himself has no Fourth World secret and none is claimed for him.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **So play the village accordingly, and it costs one adjustment of tone.** ☆☆☆ **The stilt-house village at the end of the river is not a delivery address. It is where something is kept** — ⚠ which is exactly why an old shaman who did not know they were coming still knows what to do with the box, **and why a feathered serpent arrives to collect it and explains nothing.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **Say none of that.** ☆ **The runners hand over a crate in a village and go home.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **7.4 · *Legacy*, completed. They held these Scrolls. They chose who got them. They watched a magician test them twice and get two different answers.** ⚠⚠ **Now they carry the same crate up a river to hand it to a dragon** — ☆☆ and if they chose Mitsuhama in Boston, **the corporation chasing them across the Gulf is chasing what the runners gave it.**

☆☆ **7.5 · *My Name Is Legion*.** ⚠ **Toshi Akimura, the fixer with the jet and the four governments,** is back — ☆☆☆ **and the secret the outline said they would not learn for a season is the secret that makes this job make sense.**

☆☆ **1.3 · *Site of Desecration*, if the Pentagon lived.** ⚠ **A crew that owed them their lives since 2053 gets to pay it, in the Gulf of Mexico, against pirates.** ☆ **See the box above.**

☆ **6.1.** ⚠ The last time the team handled a bequest of Dunkelzahn's, **it was photographs of pyramids on another planet.** ☆☆ **This one is heavier and further away and nobody explains it either.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **This is the season's travel episode and you should let it be one.** ⚠ **A meet, a sea crossing, a river city, and days of jungle. Four distinct places, four distinct dangers, and no building to infiltrate anywhere in it.** ☆ **After 8.1's mountain and 8.2's temple, that change of key is deliberate.**
- ⚠⚠ **The decker will be bored, and the book says so.** ☆☆ **Warn the player out of character before the session** and give them the boat, the guide, the gangers and the negotiation with Hilde. ⚠ **Do not invent a host in the jungle to fix it.**
- ☆☆☆ **Let the Scrolls defend themselves at least once, at the worst possible moment for someone else.** ⚠ **A Force 10 great form air spirit arriving because a pirate shot at a crate is the image the whole chapter is built to deliver.**
- ⚠⚠ **Miyamoto keeps her word and Kozakura does not.** ☆☆ **Play that split honestly** — she is a professional who suspects her own bosses set her up to fail, **and he is the reason she is right.** ⚠ **A team that surrenders the crate to her and then gets blindsided by him has learned something true about Mitsuhama.**

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- ⭐ **The old shaman's surprise is worth protecting.** ⚠ **Nobody in the village was expecting this. Do not have them waiting with torches and ceremony.**
- ⚠ **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** ⭐ everything here converts by rating and Force without difficulty; ⚠⚠ **the one thing to check is the Engulf damage on the blood trees (8M per turn)**, which is lethal to a 2E-scaled party at the wrong moment. ⭐ **Keep the number and telegraph the trees.**
- ⭐⭐ **And end on the serpent.** ⚠⚠⚠ **No exposition, no reward ceremony, no answers.** ⭐ **It thanks them gravely, it takes the crate, and it goes.**

8.4 · Balance

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA **#7332**, **SR3**), adventure **4 of 7.** ⭐ **Seattle → Hong Kong → Vladivostok → Hong Kong.** ⚠ **Two runs in one chapter**, and the second one is a burglary with no violence in it at all.

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · delivering Sen Lo **1** · ⭐⭐ **the Skytower run 2.**

⚠⚠ **Two points for one job is the highest single award in the season so far**, and it is paid for **redecorating a room.**

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY IS

Two eastern great dragons — LUNG and RYUMYO — have spent decades fighting a proxy war over the dragon-lines and power sites of Asia and the Pacific Rim. ⭐ Neither has ever won. **That stalemate is the balance of the chapter's title.**

⚠⚠ **And Dunkelzahn broke it with a bequest.**

The will gave Wuxing 200 million nuyen, a Coin of Luck, and the Jade Dragon of Wind and Fire. ⭐⭐ **Wu Lung-Wai used the Jade Dragon to intensify the power site under the Wuxing Skytower in Hong Kong** — a site his father **personally chose in 2017** for its chi, ⚠ *decades before anyone could have known his son would inherit a mana-tapping artifact.*

⚠⚠⚠ **Wuxing now draws more and more chi, and rises meteorically, and Hong Kong's magic is warping around it.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Hestaby's answer is not to stop it. It is to split it.** ⚠ She strikes a bargain with **BUTTERCUP**, the free spirit who sits on Yamatetsu's board, **to divert the stored energy out of Hong Kong and into Yamatetsu at Vladivostok** — ⭐ balancing the two corporations, **and keeping Lung and Ryumyo occupied with each other instead of with the Rite.**

⭐⭐ **Two runs deliver it:** ① **extract the geomancer SEN LO** from Hong Kong and deliver him to Vladivostok; ② ⚠⚠ **break into the Wuxing Skytower penthouse and rearrange the furniture.**

THE MEET — THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE, AGAIN

Seattle's exclusive rotating restaurant at the top of the Space Needle — the same room where Dunkelzahn's head of security briefed them behind a white-noise generator in 5.7.

Their Mr. Johnson is an eighteen-year-old Japanese girl.

BUTTERCUP IS AN ULTIMATE-LEVEL FREE SPIRIT AND THE TABLE WILL NOT SEE IT. Her aura Masking is **Grade-9-initiate equivalent — a player character sees a mundane teenager unless they beat that, and they will not beat that.**

What she actually is: Magic 9, Essence 9, Willpower 6, Intelligence 6, a Grade-3 initiate with **Geomancy 8**, **Divining (Sortilege) 5**, Aura Reading 6, and **Shape Earth** and **Shape Water** among her spells. **She sits on the board of a megacorporation as a major stockholder.**

And the book's instruction about her is unusually blunt: use her to move the story along without worrying about her disrupting it — and she will *mercilessly* eliminate anyone who tries to bind her.

Term	What Buttercup offers
Run one — Sen Lo	**50,000¥ per runner**
Run two — the Skytower	**120,000¥ each**
Advance	**5,000¥**

AND THE MEET IS STRAFED. A Northrup Wasp attack helicopter opens up on the restaurant with its chin gun — hired by HIDEO YOSHIDA, the ex-Yamatetsu chairman, whose entire remaining ambition is to disrupt anything Buttercup does. **A Perception (6) gives the team a moment's warning.**

And if the runners are losing, Buttercup handles it herself, with powerful magic, in front of them.

THE SINGLE BEST CHARACTER BEAT AVAILABLE IN THIS SEASON IS FREE, AND IT IS HERE.

Play the whole meet as a teenage girl ordering dessert. Bored, polite, faintly amused, checking a commlink. **Let the runners condescend to her.** Let somebody at the table say *"who's your boss, kid."*

Then a helicopter opens fire on a rotating restaurant six hundred feet up, and the girl puts down her spoon and deals with it.

Do not explain what she is afterwards. She does not confirm, she does not threaten, **she returns to the terms of the contract at the exact sentence she left off.** **The players will spend the rest of the chapter being extremely polite to a teenager, and that is the correct outcome.**

One hard line: if anybody at the table starts theorising about binding her, let an NPC — Radek, Akimura, anyone with sense — talk them out of it in plain language. The book is not bluffing.

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HONG KONG DAYS — FINDING SEN LO

⚠⚠ **Hong Kong is warped**, by the comet's passage and by what Wuxing is doing underneath the city: ☆ **walking dead in the streets, and strange spirits that belong to no tradition anybody can name.**

☆☆ **SEN LO** is a well-known geomancer and feng shui master, **about sixty**, ⚠ **a wujen and emphatically not a combat mage — Geomancy 8**, Divining, Sortilege. **His home and office have been ransacked.** He is hiding on a houseboat at the Hong Kong docks. ☆ **He wants his old successful life back**, and he will take Buttercup's offer of escape.

⚠ **Why he is hiding: he owes gambling debts to the RED DRAGON TRIAD.**

Three parties are looking for him at once:

Hunter	What they want
☆ **The runners**	Him, alive, on a plane
⚠⚠ **The Red Dragon Triad**	☆ **Alive if possible, dead if not** — the adept **Kun Xilang** (Kung Fu 8, Killing Hands) and the dwarf wujen **Little Chang** (Sorcery 6, Spirit of the Ground), with soldiers
⚠ **Wuxing**	☆☆ **They want him too**, and they are the ones he would be working against

☆ **The legwork route is Etiquette (Street), 15 successes** — ⚠ or deck his records, or track him ritually. ⚠⚠ **And a Triad agent named HAN tails the team the whole time**, hunting the same man from behind them.

> ☆☆☆ **AND HERE IS A LOOP THE MODULE NEVER SPELLS OUT.**
>
> **The Red Dragon Triad answers, ultimately, to the great dragon LUNG.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **So the geomancer is in hiding from a dragon's organisation, over gambling debts, and the job is to smuggle him out from under that dragon — ☆☆ in order to rebalance a dragon-line war that Lung is one of the two combatants in.**
>
> ⚠ **Nobody in the fiction connects those.** ☆ **The Triad soldiers are collecting a debt, and that is all they think they are doing.** ⚠⚠ **And that is worth more than a reveal:** in this season, **the great dragons' reach is not a conspiracy, it is infrastructure. A loan shark in Kowloon is a dragon's hand, and neither of them experiences it that way.**
>
> ☆ **If a player works it out, let them be right and say nothing more.**

COLD RUSSIAN NIGHTS — VLADIVOSTOK

☆ **They deliver Sen Lo to Buttercup**, and the old man **bows to her and calls her "gracious lady" — ⚠⚠ which is the only confirmation the table will ever get, and it comes from a sixty-year-old geomancer who can see what he is looking at.**

⚠ **Hideo Yoshida's company men — two of them, in a Eurocar Westwind** — tail the team through Vladivostok. ☆ Capture or escape; **it is a pressure scene, not a set piece.**

☆☆ **Then Buttercup pays, and briefs the second run.**

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⚠⚠⚠ SCALING THE DRAGON'S TOWER

Break into the penthouse of the Wuxing Skytower in Hong Kong.

Layer	What it is
⚠⚠ **The ward**	**Rating 8**
⚠⚠⚠ **Elementals**	☆ **Three bound Force 6 air elementals**
☆☆☆ **The astral shallow**	⚠⚠ **Everything is visible.** *Even mundane security sees astral forms.* **The single nastiest environmental fact in the season**
⚠ **The host**	**Red — 10/15/18/16/16/18**
☆ **Getting in**	The executive elevator passcode — ⚠ **kidnap and mind-probe a Wuxing exec** — or a decker running Logon → Locate → Control Slave

☆☆ **THE PENTHOUSE IS A TEMPLE.** ⚠ A meditation room: **a circular raked-gravel pool, and a jade carving of three leaping fish.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE JOB IS NINJA INTERIOR DECORATING.**

Shift the statuettes. Rake the gravel. Pluck lotus petals. ⚠⚠ **Base 180 minutes, on Intelligence (4) tests —** ☆ **feng shui adjustments that redirect the dragon-line's chi three thousand kilometres north to Vladivostok.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And it is on a timetable: inside five days, but not so early that Wuxing notices.**

☆☆ **RIDING THE DRAGON'S TAIL.** On completion, the runners get **a vision**: the mystic forces surge, ⚠ **and LUNG and RYUMYO manifest as vast astral serpents, eyeing each other warily.**

> ☆☆☆ ***"How have you done this?"***
>
> ***"It is not my doing."***

⚠⚠ **Two great dragons, each certain the other has finally moved, and both wrong.** ☆ **That is Hestaby's whole play, and the runners are the only beings alive who saw it land.**

☆☆☆ **A FINDING, LABELLED AS ONE: THE JADE CARVING IN THAT ROOM IS ALMOST CERTAINLY THE JADE DRAGON OF WIND AND FIRE.**

⚠ **The module says only "a three-leaping-fish jade carving," as set dressing, and never comments on it.**

☆☆ **But the KB's own file on the bequest says exactly this:** the Jade Dragon of Wind and Fire is a **~25 kg antique jade carving** in which the ancient sculptor **Chan Lo**, ordered by the First Emperor to carve *a dragon of wind and fire*, instead **"heard" the jade's true nature — *pah-tah, pah-tah, shooosh* — and carved three carp leaping from the waves.** ⚠⚠ *The lesson being that one must sculpt the stone where it wants to go.*

⚠⚠⚠ **The artifact is three leaping fish. The room at the top of the power site contains three leaping fish. The artifact is what intensified that power site in the first place.**

☆ **One wrinkle, stated honestly:** the bequest file says Lung-Wai moved it to **his maximum-security personal office in downtown Hong Kong.** ⚠ **The Skytower penthouse is a**

defensible reading of that and not a certain one. ☆☆ Treating them as the same object costs nothing, contradicts nothing, and is enormously better.

⚠⚠ If you take it: do not let the runners realise, and do not let them steal it. ☆☆☆ The scene is that the team performs a delicate ritual redirection in a quiet room, six feet from a priceless magical artifact they have no idea they are standing next to, and then leaves without touching it. ⚠ A player who reads the description carefully and *asks* has earned the answer — and stealing it is a different campaign.

☆ And it makes Wuxing's response make sense. A corporation notices a burglary. A corporation notices someone rearranged the gravel in the room where the artifact lives immediately.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆ 50,000 nuyen each for Sen Lo and 120,000 each for the Skytower**, ⚠ against **a 5,000 advance.**
- **☆☆☆ A vision of two great dragons accusing each other of something the runners personally did.**
- **⚠⚠ Buttercup**, as a contact who is not a contact — **☆ an Ultimate-level free spirit on a corporate board who now knows their names and their work.**
- **☆ Sen Lo**, alive and grateful and reinstalled in Vladivostok, **⚠ and the Red Dragon Triad's memory of who took him.**
- **⚠⚠ Hideo Yoshida**, a wealthy discarded chairman with a grudge that has nothing to do with them.
- **☆☆ And they broke into Wuxing and left no bodies** — ⚠ *if they were good.*

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Lung and Ryumyo now suspect each other**	⚠⚠ **8.8.** ☆ **Two votes in the Council chamber, aimed at each other instead of at Hestaby**
☆☆ **Buttercup owes nobody and remembers everybody**	⚠ Any season, any city with a Yamatetsu office
☆☆ **The Red Dragon Triad knows their faces**	⚠⚠ **Lung's organisation.** ☆ It matters in **8.8** only if you want it to
☆ **Sen Lo, in Vladivostok**	⚠ A world-class geomancer who owes them his life
☆ **`rite.balance` — passed or failed**	**8.8**
⚠ **Wuxing's chi is now split**	☆☆ **Wuxing's meteoric rise slows, and the corporation never learns why**

☆☆ CROSSOVER — LIGHT, AND DELIBERATELY SO.

⚠ The eastern dragons carry Fourth World identities and this is not the chapter to spend them. ☆☆ Ryumyo in particular has one, and it explains a great deal about why he is *east* and why he is *alone* — **⚠⚠⚠ and none of that may be touched here, because in this chapter he is an astral serpent in a vision, saying four words, and the four words are better than any explanation.**

☆☆☆ What this chapter *does* contribute to the long argument is the geomancy itself, and it is worth naming for the gamemaster's own benefit: the runners spend an evening rearranging small objects in a quiet room in order to change where the

> **power of the earth goes. ⚠⚠ That is not a Sixth World idea. ☆ The Sixth World rediscovered it, gave it a corporate application, and put it at the top of a tower.**
>
> **⚠ Say none of that. ☆☆ Just let the ritual be slow, physical and reverent — gravel, statuettes, lotus petals, three hours — ⚠⚠ and let it be the least high-tech thing the team has done in eight seasons, in the most high-tech room in Hong Kong.**

> **☆ AND ONE THING THE SEASON HAS EARNED BY NOW. ⚠⚠** In 8.1 a dragon audited them. In 8.2 a dragon ate a man in front of them. **Here, two great dragons never see them at all — ☆☆☆ and the runners change the balance of power between them anyway. That is the ladder this season is climbing, and 8.4 is the rung where the players stop being impressed and start being dangerous.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 7.4 · *Legacy*, and it is sharper than it looks. ⚠⚠ The real employer behind the Scrolls job was Wu Lung-Wai, president and chairman of Wuxing — the man who hired *"a series of agents"* so that *"there can be no connection to me until it is too late."*

⚠⚠⚠ He is the target of this chapter. ☆☆ And if the team dealt with Wuxing in Boston, Wuxing holds their DNA — permanently — and they are now burgling Wuxing's own penthouse. ☆ Nobody needs to say that out loud. Somebody at the table will.

☆☆ Season Six, one more time. ⚠ The will has now paid out **four ways** in this campaign — Mars photographs, an aquasphere, the Elemental Scrolls, **☆☆☆ and a jade carving that quietly made a second-tier Hong Kong import house into a rising power. ⚠ No retrofit is needed for this one:** the will is a public document, **Shadowland has been arguing about the Wuxing windfall since 2057**, and the team simply never had reason to look.

☆ 5.7 · *Dry Run*. ⚠ The Eye of the Needle, again. **Last time a dragon's head of security sat across from them. This time it is a girl.**

RUNNING NOTES

- **☆☆☆ Run the two halves in different keys. ⚠ Hong Kong is a manhunt in a haunted city** — walking dead, warped mana, three factions chasing one frightened old man. **☆ The Skytower is a heist with no violence in it**, and **the astral shallow means invisibility and astral scouting are actively worse than walking in quietly.**
- **⚠⚠ The astral shallow is the thing to prepare. ☆☆ Every magical solution the party has relied on for eight seasons is visible to a mundane guard in that building. ⚠** Say so early, through Buttercup or Sen Lo, **so the plan they make is a real one.**
- **☆☆ Let Sen Lo do the briefing for run two. ⚠** He is a **Geomancy 8** master who has just been rescued, **☆ and having him explain what raking gravel does — properly, patiently, as a craft — is what makes the second half feel like magic rather than a chore.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ Do not let the Intelligence (4) tests become a chore either. ☆ Three hours, in a silent room, at night, in the tower of a corporation that holds their DNA. ⚠** Cut away to the decker holding the host, to a lift moving two floors below, to the gravel. **Make the clock the antagonist.**

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- ⭐ **Sen Lo is not a fighter and should never be made into one.** ⚠ **He is sixty, he is in debt, and he is not brave.** ⭐⭐ **A team that gets him out gently gets a better ally than a team that gets him out fast.**
- ⚠ **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** ⭐ the Red host and the Rating 8 ward convert straight; ⚠⚠ **the astral shallow is the one element with no clean 2E equivalent** — ⭐ run it as *"astral forms are visible to normal sight inside the building, full stop"* and do not model it further.
- ⚠⚠ **NAMING NOTE, flagged not resolved:** ⭐ **the KB spells the Wuxing chairman both *Wu Lung-Wai* and *Wu Lung-Wei*** across two source books. **Same man.** ⚠ Pick one at your table and stay with it; **this document uses *Wu Lung-Wai*, following the will file.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And end on the vision.** ⚠ **Two serpents the size of weather systems, in the astral, accusing each other.** ⭐ **Then it is over, and the team is standing in a very quiet room with a rake.**

8.5 · Hunting

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA **#7332**, **SR3**), adventure **5 of 7.** ⭐ **Caerleon and Llandovery, Wales.** ⚠⚠ **The only chapter in the season where the runners are the quarry.**

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · reaching the Songbird **1** · dealing with the hunters **1** · ⭐⭐⭐ **discovering the explosives in time 1.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Read that fourth award and understand what it means. The book pays a Karma point for noticing that the prize is a bomb.**

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY IS — AND THIS IS THE ONE WHERE SHE USES THEM AS BAIT

Steal the Silver Songbird from the hoard of the Welsh great dragon RHONABWY, on behalf of the Welsh great dragon CELEDYR.

⭐⭐ **The run is legitimate. Celedyr genuinely wants it, genuinely hires them, and genuinely pays.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And Hestaby tipped Rhonabwy off that he was coming.**

⭐ **She walks her own runners into a trap on purpose** — because under the Rite's rules **Rhonabwy cannot simply kill another dragon's chosen agents.** ⚠⚠ So a straightforward robbery is converted into **a hunting contest between two dragons' proxies**, which is the facet this chapter is scored on.

Outcome	What Hestaby gets
⭐⭐⭐ **The runners escape with the Songbird**	**She scores the hunting point** — ⚠⚠ **and she has deceived Rhonabwy *and* Celedyr in the same night**
⚠ **The runners fail**	⭐ **She loses nothing. Celedyr takes the fall** — it was his run, his amulets, his agents

⚠⚠ **There is no version of this where she is exposed, and there is no version where the runners are told.**

> ☆☆☆ **THIS IS THE CHAPTER WHERE THE PATRON STOPS BEING BENIGN, AND YOU MUST NOT SIGNAL IT.**

> ⚠ **In 8.1 she auditioned them. In 8.3 she had them do something decent. Here she sells their location to a great dragon to see whether they can outrun his pets.**
>
> ☆☆ **Every instinct will tell you to soften this — a warning, a hint, a suspiciously generous piece of equipment.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not. Run the chapter completely straight**, exactly as a team that has never heard of Hestaby would experience it: **a dragon hired us, a rival dragon was ready, and it went badly.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Then, in 8.7, when she tells them she was their employer all along, one player will go very quiet and say "Wales."** ⚠ **That is the moment this chapter exists for, and it is worth more than any amount of foreshadowing.**

> ⚠⚠ **And when she is challenged on it — and she will be — she does not deny it and does not apologise.** ☆ **She needed to know whether they could survive being hunted. Now she knows. So do they.**

ALL FOR A SONG — CELEDYR'S LAIR

☆☆ **Caerleon, Wales.** ⚠ **A Transys Neuronet corporate complex** — steel, chrome and glass standing among ancient stones — **built over a Roman amphitheatre.**

☆☆☆ **The amphitheatre is the lair.**

Their guide is AMON, a human-form African in a gold collar, kilt and headdress, who takes them down and down, ⚠ and **Mr. Johnson is a tall, brass-haired man in robes**, waiting in an arena that has been underground for two thousand years.

Term	What Celedyr offers
☆ **The fee**	**150,000¥ —** ⚠ **or up to twice that in Transys hardware, software or cyberware —** ☆☆☆ **or in orichalcum**
☆☆ **Supplied**	⚠ **Magical amulets that bypass Rhonabwy's guardian spirits — and not his physical security**
⚠⚠ **The clock**	**The amulets are temporary and fade at sunrise**
⚠⚠⚠ **The restriction**	☆ **No advance scouting.** It risks alerting Rhonabwy

☆ **He is following the Rite's rules and he will not explain what they are.** ⚠⚠ **The runners are being handed a set of constraints by a being who will not say where the constraints come from**, and that is the correct experience of being a proxy.

> ⚠⚠⚠ **THE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING FOR THIS CHAPTER, AND IT IS A BAD ONE TO GET WRONG.**

> ☆ **In 2.4 the runners ran a job in the UK and heard rumours of an AI-research breakthrough at Transys Neuronet** — the third of three corporations the players were told, on the record and without comment, were chasing artificial intelligence. ⚠⚠ **That drumbeat paid off in Season Seven.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **And now they are standing under a Transys facility talking to the dragon who owns it.**
>
> ☆☆ **Celedyr is genuinely a Matrix power** — the KB has him **out-pacing Lofwyr in the Matrix**, which is not a small claim. ⚠ **So the temptation is enormous, and it is wrong: he has nothing to do with Deus.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Season Seven's entire argument was that the thing which nearly ended the world was eight years old, built on purpose by people chasing a contract, and completely modern.** ⚠⚠ **Attaching a great dragon to it retroactively is the single most expensive mistake available in this document**, because it cheapens the one season that earned its ending honestly.

> ☆ **What you may do, and should:** let a player recognise the name **Transys** and feel the hair go up. ⚠ **Let nothing come of it. Two things being true about one corporation is how the world works.**

INTO THE DRAGON'S LAIR

⚠ **Tilt-rotor to about ten kilometres out from Llandovery, then across the night countryside on foot.**

⚠⚠ **THE FIRST AMBUSH TEACHES THE CHAPTER'S RULE.** ☆ **A wolf pack — one per runner — led by the wolf shapeshifter VOLK. A dark, silent, deadly melee.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And using magic to solve it gives the team away.**

☆☆ **That is the lesson, delivered early and cheaply, and the whole rest of the night runs on it.**

THE LABYRINTH. A hillside cave entrance:

Layer	What it is
Sensors	**Rating 5 motion sensors and cameras**
The door	**Rating 6 maglock**
⚠⚠ **The ward**	☆ **Rating 10 —** ⚠ **the amulets get them past the spirits, not past this**
⚠⚠⚠ **If tripped**	**Neurostun, 6S per turn**

☆☆ **And the tunnels are wide enough to drive an eighteen-wheeler down,** ⚠ **because they were not built for people. Say that once and let the table sit with it.**

THE TREASURY. ⚠ Behind a **Barrier 24 reinforced door and a second Rating 10 ward**: ☆ **Ali Baba's cave** — tons of gold, jewelled arms and armour, ⚠⚠ **and a three-metre rearing dragon statue in gold.**

☆☆☆ THE SILVER SONGBIRD, WHICH IS A BOMB

A life-sized silver bird with tiny sapphire eyes. ☆☆ **It sings** — *an impossibly sweet song that lifts the spirit.*

- **Body 2.** ⚠ **Magic cannot harm or change it. Spells do not fail against it; they simply fail.**
- ⚠⚠ **It carries a hidden tracking signal**, activated on demand.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And the bottom of its cage conceals a kilo of C-12 and a radio detonator.**

Rhonabwy's retribution and safety measure, in one object. The Karma point for finding it is the most honestly earned point in the season.

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

The three-metre golden dragon statue shimmers, and is Rhonabwy.

> ***"Welcome to my home... I will make you an offer: take the Songbird and leave, but you will be HUNTED by my pets — escape them alone and unaided and it's yours; if not, at least you'll give my pets a chance."***

He was waiting. He has been waiting all night. And he is being scrupulously fair by rules the runners have never been told.

THE HUNT IS ON

Five minutes' head start. A pickup point about ten kilometres east. And the Songbird is broadcasting.

Hunter	What it is
BRANWEN	**A drake** — Rhonabwy's servant, elf and dracoform, **leads the hunt.** Improved Invisibility, Firewall, a pistol
VOLK	The wolf shapeshifter, second in command — **passes as an ordinary wolf until he is wounded and starts regenerating**
Andres	A centaur trampler
A kludde	An avian-canine shapeshifter scout — **Magical Guard, +7 Spell Resistance**
A gargoyle	Flies, and wants the kill
A naga	**Camouflage, Blindness**

AND THE RITE'S RULE CUTS BOTH WAYS, WHICH IS THE BEST MECHANICAL IDEA IN THE CHAPTER. Rhonabwy's guardian spirits stay out of it — the Rite forbids outside aid to either side. **Which means the runners must not summon either**, or the guardians come for *them*.

Two proxy teams, no reinforcements, ten kilometres of Welsh hillside, at night.

Three ways through:

- **ESCAPE. Disable the Songbird's tracker with a sharp blow** — *the elegant solution, and it requires realising the bird is the problem.* Traps, false trails. **Some of the hunters fly, and some are faster than anything on two legs.**
- **OVERCOME. They do not work well as a team and they have exploitable weaknesses — but they fear Rhonabwy *"more than death itself,"* so none of them will break off.**
- **NEGOTIATE.** *Unlikely. The hunters have no mercy.*

And the module offers the supreme sacrifice openly: one runner holds the hunters so the rest get away. If a player reaches for it, let them have it, and make it count.

⭐⭐ THE AFTERMATH, WHICH IS THE REAL STING

Radek delivers the Songbird to Celedyr — and it is a fake.

⚠⚠⚠ A non-magical replica. ⭐ Celedyr concludes the runners were duped somewhere along the way, chalks it up to the Rite, and does not blame them.

⭐⭐⭐ So the runners survive a hunt, win a legendary artifact by a great dragon's own terms, hand it over as agreed — and it is switched in transit by the fixer they trust. ⚠ Hestaby ends the night holding the Silver Songbird, having deceived Rhonabwy, Celedyr and her own team in a single operation.

> ✎ **⚠⚠ DOES RADEK KNOW? THE MODULE DOES NOT SAY, AND THE ANSWER IS YOURS.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **Recommendation: he does not. ⚠ 8.1 established him as genuinely, testably honest** — *Analyze Truth finds nothing, Mind Probe finds nothing, because there is nothing* — ⭐ and he was contacted by an anonymous intermediary who pays well and does not explain.
>
> ⭐⭐ **So he is handed a case and told where to take it, and he takes it**, and when Celedyr's people report a forgery, **Radek is as confused as anyone and slightly humiliated.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **That is far worse than a corrupt fixer, and much more useful: ⭐ it means the runners' most trusted contact is a channel, not a person with a plan — and in 8.7 they will realise that everything they were ever told came through a man who did not know either.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **150,000 nuyen — ⚠ or up to double in Transys tech, or in orichalcum.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **They survived being hunted for sport by a great dragon's household**, unaided, by rules nobody explained.
- ⚠⚠ **Rhonabwy's respect, and Rhonabwy's attention. ⭐ He offered fair terms and they beat them. He is an art collector; he now knows their names.**
- ⚠ **Celedyr's continued goodwill, ⭐⭐ entirely undeserved and entirely useful.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And a kilo of C-12 they either found or did not.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **"Wales"**	⚠⚠ **8.7. ⭐ The single word that will detonate the reveal**
⭐⭐ **Rhonabwy owes them a fair verdict**	⚠ **8.8. ⭐ He is in the room, and he watched them win honestly**
⭐⭐ **Celedyr believes they were duped**	⚠⚠ **8.8.** ⭐ A great dragon whose goodwill rests on a false premise
⭐ **Branwen, if she lived**	⚠ **A drake who lost.** ⭐⭐ And the runners have now met one — *see the crossover box*
⭐⭐⭐ **Orichalcum, if they took the payment in it**	⚠ **See the box below**
⭐ **`rite.hunting` — passed or failed**	**8.8**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — AND THE PAYMENT OPTION IS THE WHOLE BOX.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **A great dragon offers to pay them in orichalcum.**
>
> ☆☆ **In 5.4 the runners handled an orichalcum key** — an artefact whose aura read *"truly ancient"* and *"of a kind the magician has never seen before,"* a Rating 8 focus **that needed no bonding**, which is not how any focus in 2057 works. ☆ The line the legwork gave them was: *"it looked **older than God** to him and **it drew its power in a funny sort of way**."* ⚠ **The key left the board and nothing was explained. That was correct.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **And orichalcum is Tier A in the register: the same impossible metal in both worlds, and in both worlds it is made, not mined.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **So here is what this chapter quietly offers, at no cost: a great dragon treats the substance as a currency.** ☆ Not a relic. Not a mystery. **An alternative to nuyen, offered in the same breath as cyberware, by a being old enough to have watched it made.**
>
> ☆☆ **If the team takes the orichalcum, say nothing at all.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Let them carry away a quantity of the impossible metal because it was on a menu. A player who remembers the key from 5.4 and puts those two facts side by side has been handed something no explanation could improve.**
>
> ⚠ **And if they take the nuyen, that is fine too.** ☆ **The offer being made is the tell. Whether they accept it changes nothing.**

> ☆ **ONE MORE, FREE:** ⚠ **Branwen is a drake** — ☆☆ and the KB's own note on Radek raises, without deciding, that *"there may be more to Radek than meets the eye — he may even be a drake disguised as a human."* ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not answer that in this chapter or any other.** ☆ **Just let the team meet a drake in Wales, and let their fixer be exactly as he has always been.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **2.4 · *Imago*, six seasons later.** ⚠⚠ **The team ran a job in Britain in 2054 and heard that Transys Neuronet had made an AI breakthrough.** ☆ **Now they walk into a Transys complex in Wales and are hired by the thing that owns it.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And it means nothing — see the anti-conflation box above, which is the most important paragraph in this entry.**

☆☆ **5.4 · *Strange Attraction*.** ⚠ **Orichalcum, offered as wages.** ☆ **See the crossover box.**

☆ **8.1.** ⚠⚠ **The casualty count from the Shasta Lodge is still being kept**, and this is the chapter where a team that shoots first has the worst night of its life — ☆ **because here, shooting first is what the hunters are counting on.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **This is a chase, and chases die if you roll them.** ☆☆ **Run the ten kilometres as a sequence of decisions, not a sequence of tests:** the stream, the drystone wall, the ridgeline they must not silhouette on, ⚠ **the moment somebody works out the bird is screaming their position.**
- ☆☆☆ **Give them the tracker fairly.** ⚠ The Songbird's signal is *"activate-on-demand"* and hidden — **but a team that thinks to examine the prize will find it**, and **a sharp blow disables it.** ⚠⚠ **Do not gate that behind a hard test. The idea is the reward.**

- ⚠⚠ **And give them the C-12 fairly too.** ☆ **A kilo of explosive in the cage bottom is a searchable, findable, physical thing.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A team that never looks deserves what happens; a team that looks deserves to find it.**
- ☆☆ **Play the hunters as individuals who do not like each other.** ⚠ *They do not coordinate well* — **that is the printed opening and it is the party's whole tactical hope.** ☆ **Volk arrives before Andres. The naga waits too long. The gargoyle goes high because it wants the kill.**
- ⚠ **Rhonabwy is not a villain and should not be played as one.** ☆☆ **He caught burglars in his treasury, offered them a sporting chance he did not owe them, and kept his word.** ⚠⚠ **He is more honourable than their employer, and the players should be allowed to notice.**
- ⚠ **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** ☆ Barrier 24, the Rating 10 wards and Neurostun 6S convert straight. ⚠⚠ **Drakes are SR3-era** — ☆ if your table is on straight 2E, run **Branwen as a shapeshifting spirit-served servant** and change nothing else; **her dracoform matters for one dramatic beat, not for a stat line.**
- ☆☆☆ **And let the bird sing while they are being hunted.** ⚠⚠ **An impossibly sweet song, in a rucksack, in the dark, on a hillside, while six things track it. That is the image of the chapter.**

8.6 · Rest

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA #7332, **SR3**), adventure **6 of 7.** ☆ **The ruins of Tehran.** ⚠⚠ **The most free-form chapter in the season, and the only one that pays you for not fighting.**

☆ **Karma:** ⚠ **surviving 2** *(the highest survival award in the season — Tehran is the lethal one)* · overcoming the wraith **1** · ☆☆☆ **handling encounters non-violently 1 · and 1 for either getting the Shroud *or* letting Aden claim it.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Look at that last award, because this campaign has printed one exactly like it before.**

⚠⚠⚠ **WHAT THE JOB IS — AND THE OBJECT IS THE ARGUMENT**

Go into the ruins of Tehran and recover the Shroud of Shadows.

☆☆ **Forty years ago the Ayatollah declared a jihad against the Awakened, and the great dragon ADEN levelled the city.** ⚠ It has never been rebuilt. **It is a war zone full of ghouls, harpies, ghosts, and *shedim* — predatory spirits that possess corpses —** ⚠⚠ **and most of the corpses they wear are Aden's.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE OBJECT EVERYONE IN THAT CITY IS KILLING FOR IS THE ONE OBJECT THAT STOPS PEOPLE KILLING.**

The Shroud of Shadows soothes. ⚠ Touch it and it lays a Force 12 calm across you. **It makes violence hard.** ☆ It quiets background count. **It disrupts spirits that possess the dead.**

⚠⚠ **It was willed to Aden by Dunkelzahn — and Aden does not want it.** ☆☆☆ **He only wants to be certain nobody else holds it.**

THE WRAITH, WHICH EATS KARMA

⚠⚠⚠ **A rare violence-feeding spirit is loose in Tehran, and it is manipulating every faction in the city toward killing each other.**

Amorphous black-grey mist, or a figure in tattered robes. ⚠ **Its native metaplane is unknown. It has no known true name.** ☆☆ **And it is immune to Conjuring — it cannot be summoned and it cannot be banished.**

Its powers	What they do
Empathy · Fear · Influence	⚠ It inflames hatred and steers people into violence
⚠⚠⚠ **Karma Tap**	☆☆☆ **It drains a point of Good Karma for every death that happens under its Influence**
Magic Resistance · Magic Sense · Materialization	⚠ It feeds in person

⚠⚠ **It starts at roughly Force 1D6÷2 and it grows through the adventure**, gaining Spirit Energy and Force from every corpse.

☆☆☆ **UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MECHANIC IS DOING TO YOUR TABLE.** ⚠ In a season gated at **120+ Karma**, where every player has spent eight seasons accumulating the currency of becoming better at being alive, **there is now a thing in the world that eats it.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Not their gear, not their nuyen, not their health. Their Karma.**

☆☆ **And it takes a point every time they kill somebody while it is watching.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **THE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING, AND THIS IS THE HARDEST ONE IN THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT.**
>
> ☆ **Look at what is in this chapter. A spirit from an unknown metaplane, with no true name, that cannot be banished, which feeds on suffering and violence, and which drains the essence of accumulated experience out of living people — in a dead city, surrounded by things that wear corpses.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **If a gamemaster is ever going to reach for the Enemy, it is here. Do not.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **The rationale this document set out at 6.3 is the answer, and it applies with full force:** *the Enemy is not a mystery the campaign is withholding; it is a fact the campaign has already delivered at 4.6.* ⚠⚠ **Which means every Sixth World horror that isn't it can be exactly what it appears to be.**
>
> ☆☆ **The wraith is a rare predatory spirit that found a good hunting ground. The shedim are what the Sixth World grew in a city full of unburied dead.** ⚠ **Both are entirely sufficient as themselves, and both are more frightening for being ordinary.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **And there is a second reason, specific to this chapter.** ☆☆☆ **The wraith is beatable — by a blanket.** ⚠ **A thing you can defeat by putting a sheet over it is not the Enemy**, and a gamemaster who dresses it up as one has written a scene where the players think they have beaten something they have not, **which is the worst outcome available in this season.**

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

THE CITY, AND THE FOUR FACTIONS IN IT

⚠ **Arrival, outside Tehran: a Mad Merc attacks —** ☆ **a puppet of the wraith**, which then materialises to feed. ⚠⚠ **It uses Influence to make one runner attack, and takes its Karma from the kill.**

☆☆ **That is the tutorial, and it should cost them something.**

Then they cross the ruined city to the mosque, and everything they meet is a choice:

Faction	What they are
⚠⚠ **The shedim**	☆ Corpse-possessing predators — Deathly Aura, Inhabitation, Regeneration, ⚠ **Karma Drain. Mostly wearing badly decayed bodies Aden made**
☆☆☆ **Farah Al-Pasha**	⚠ **A specter — a mother who burned trying to save her children.** She leads a band of Tehran's ghosts against the shedim **desecrating their corpses**, and she **begs the runners for help.** ☆ Devout, and she speaks little English
☆☆ **Musa Muqla**	⚠ **A devout exorcist and imam**, a follower of Badr al Din Ibn Eisa, cleansing the holy places. ☆☆ **A unique aspected magician — Conjuring 4, Banishing 8, spell defence.** ⚠⚠ **He believes magic is evil and uses only defensive and banishing magic**
☆ **Mack Donelley**	⚠ **A Belfast merc, a Desert Wars veteran, and four loyal men — a rival team after the same Shroud.** ☆☆ **A reasonable man who will ally or betray exactly as the job requires**

☆☆☆ **AND THE CRUELLEST DETAIL IN THE CHAPTER IS THAT MUQLA CANNOT HELP.** ⚠⚠ **The one man in Tehran whose entire life is banishing spirits, with Banishing 8, in a city drowning in them —** ⚠⚠⚠ **cannot touch the wraith, because the wraith is immune to Conjuring.**

☆ **He does not know that yet. Let him find out in front of them.**

THE MOSQUE OF THE SHROUD

☆ **The Shroud is under a floor tile, in a hollow — a Strength (4) test to lift it.**

⚠⚠ **And then everyone arrives at once. Donelley's mercs, Muqla's followers, Farah's dead, the shedim —** ☆☆ **and the wraith works the room, because a mosque full of armed factions all wanting the same object is what it has been building toward the entire adventure.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE ANSWER IS IN THEIR HANDS.** ⚠ **Throw the Shroud over the wraith and it must make an Opposed Force test against Force 12 or be disrupted.**

⚠⚠ **The prize is the weapon. Nobody tells them.**

☆☆ THE SHROUD OF SHADOWS

Three metres square, sheer black silk, bordered in silver thread with tiny flowered vines. ⚠ **Supernaturally durable — normal attacks, fire and magic all simply fail against it.**

Property	Effect
⭐ **Wrapped in it**	**12 points of Hardened Armour**, ballistic and impact
⭐⭐⭐ **Touching it**	⚠ **A Force 12 Control Emotions calm. It is hard for a holder to commit violence**
⭐⭐ **Background count**	⚠ **Reduced by 1 per minute**, restoring at 1 per hour once removed
⚠⚠⚠ **Over a spirit**	⭐ **Opposed Force test vs Force 12 or DISRUPTED — drives out shedim and zombie possessors, and beats the wraith**
⭐⭐ **Over anything**	⚠⚠ **+12 to the target number of all magical attempts to locate or track it — including itself**

⚠ **That last property is why a dragon wants to be sure nobody else has it,** ⭐⭐⭐ **and it is worth sitting with: this is an object that hides things from divination. In a season decided by what the great dragons can find out about each other, somebody is walking out of Tehran with the perfect blind spot.**

⚠⚠⚠ A MEETING WITH ADEN

Leaving the city, a fifteen-metre serpent-dragon is waiting.

> ⚠⚠ ***"You have taken something that once belonged to another of my kind. You will return it, or you will die."***

⭐ **Three ways out, and the Rite governs all of them:**

Option	What happens
⚠⚠⚠ **Fight**	**Suicidal —** ⭐⭐⭐ **except for one thing: drape the Shroud over Aden and it drains his aggression and makes him hard to attack**
⭐⭐⭐ **Negotiate**	⚠⚠ **The Rite binds him — he cannot attack unless attacked first.** ⭐ **So a team that keeps its hands down can bargain**, and **he will pay out of his hoard for the Shroud's safe return to its resting place —** ⚠ **which betrays their employer**
⭐ **Escape**	⚠ A chase. **He can obstruct a non-attacking runner. He cannot strike one**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN THE CAMPAIGN A GREAT DRAGON CAN BE PHYSICALLY BEATEN, AND THE METHOD IS TO PUT A BLANKET ON IT.**

⚠⚠ **Do not play that for comedy.** ⭐ **Three metres of black silk settling over something the size of a bus, and the something going quiet. It works because the Shroud does to a dragon exactly what it does to everyone else: it takes the fight out.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE CHOICE THE KARMA REFUSES TO GRADE

⚠⚠⚠ **The final award is one point for getting the Shroud — *or* one point for letting Aden claim it.**

⭐⭐ **This campaign has printed that structure once before**, at **6.5**, and the observation this document made then stands unchanged and applies exactly:

> ☆☆☆ **The Karma says the choices are worth the same and the world says they are not. That is not a contradiction. It is the point.**

⚠ **Keep the Shroud** and Hestaby scores the facet, the team is paid, ⚠⚠ **and a great dragon who was minding his own business in a graveyard he made has been robbed by proxies in a contest he did not enter.**

⚠ **Give it back** and **Aden pays from his hoard**, ☆ the object returns to its resting place, ⚠⚠⚠ **and the team has failed their employer for the first time by choice rather than by accident.**

☆☆ **Do not put a thumb on it. Do not have Radek warn them. Write down what they chose.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **Fewer Karma points than they walked in with, if the wraith worked them properly.** ⚠⚠ **The only chapter in the campaign where the antagonist takes that.**
- ☆☆ **Either the Shroud of Shadows, or a payment out of a great dragon's hoard.**
- ⚠ **Aden's memory**, which is either *the proxies who robbed me* or *the proxies who gave it back*.
- ☆ **Farah Al-Pasha's gratitude, or her contempt —** ⚠⚠ **and a specter's opinion is a durable thing.**
- ☆☆ **Musa Muqla**, if they helped him and did not frighten him — ⚠ **a Banishing 8 exorcist is a remarkable ally for a team that keeps meeting spirits.**
- ⚠ **Mack Donelley**, allied or betrayed, ☆ **and equally reusable either way.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Aden's verdict on them**	⚠⚠ **8.8. He is in the room, and Aden is no friend of Lofwyr's**
☆☆ **The Shroud, if they kept it**	⚠⚠⚠ **8.7.** ☆ **An object that defeats divination, carried into a season decided by what dragons can learn**
☆☆ **Whatever the wraith took**	⚠ **Permanent.** ☆ Karma spent by something else is not coming back
☆ **Muqla and Farah**	⚠ Standing allies in a region the campaign has barely touched
☆ **`rite.rest` — passed, failed, or refused**	**8.8**

> ☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND THE HONEST NOTE IS THAT THE STRONGEST MATERIAL HERE IS THE ONE YOU MUST NOT USE.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **See the anti-conflation box above. It is the crossover discipline for this chapter, stated in full, and it is a prohibition rather than a permission.**
>
> ☆ **What you may quietly enjoy, and never say:** ☆☆☆ **the Shroud of Shadows is a made object of a kind the Sixth World cannot make.** ⚠ Sheer silk that fire cannot touch, that spells slide off, **that disrupts spirits and hides things from every form of magical sight.** ⚠⚠ **Dunkelzahn had it, and willed it to a dragon who does not want it and will not destroy it, and whose only stated concern is that nobody else should hold it.**

> **That is the tell, and it is entirely printed: a great dragon's whole policy toward an artifact is custody. Not use. Not study. Custody.**
>
> **Do not explain why. The strangeness of what the dragons will and will not trade for is the clue, and this chapter is one of the places the players can feel it most cleanly — an immortal being who will not take an inheritance, and will not let go of it either.**

> **And leave Aden's older name alone. He is a dragon who burned a city because a government declared war on people like him, and who has guarded the ruins ever since. That is a complete character and it needs nothing added.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

6.5, and the rhyme is exact. The Karma table pays the same for both endings, again — and the players who noticed it the first time will notice it here, **at a much larger scale, with a great dragon standing in front of them.**

The whole season's dragon ladder, inverted. In 8.1 they hid from one. In 8.2 one questioned them. In 8.4 two never saw them at all. Here one blocks their road and tells them to hand something over — and they can say no, and live, because of a rule nobody has ever explained to them.

8.5. The second chapter running in which the Rite's own rules are the only thing keeping them alive, and the second in which they are protected by something they cannot see, do not understand, and did not agree to.

RUNNING NOTES

- **This chapter rewards restraint mechanically, so tell the players that.** Not the reason — **the standard.** *"There is Karma on the table this run for handling things without killing anyone."* **Then let the wraith spend the session trying to take it back.**
- **Run the Karma Tap in the open. When a runner kills under Influence, say the number out loud. A table that watches a point come off a sheet will change how it plays within about ten minutes**, and that change *is* the adventure.
- **Farah Al-Pasha is the emotional centre and she barely speaks their language. A mother who burned trying to reach her children, still standing over the bodies, asking strangers to stop something from wearing them. Do not make her a quest-giver. Let her ask once.**
- **Donelley is not a villain either. A professional with four men who came a long way for the same object. The wraith wants those two teams to shoot at each other more than it wants anything else in the city — and the runners can simply decline.**
- **Give them the Shroud-as-weapon honestly. Its properties are discoverable by examining it**, and **a team that thinks to look will find the answer to the wraith in their own hands. Do not hide it behind a roll.**
- **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** Force 12, Hardened Armour 12 and the +12 target-number modifiers all carry across unchanged. **Shedim are Year-of-the-Comet-era critters — if your table has no shedim, run them as possessing spirits inhabiting corpses and keep the Karma Drain**, which is the only part that matters here.

- ☆☆☆ **And end it quietly.** ⚠ **Whatever they decided with Aden, the last image of Tehran should be the city itself — forty years of rubble, unburied dead, and one calm black square of silk that will not let anybody fight in front of it.**

⚠⚠⚠ 8.7 · Memory — THE PIVOT

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA #7332, SR3), adventure 7 of 7, titled ***Lore***. ☆ **Mt Shasta, and then the deep metaplanes.** ⚠⚠ **Must be run last but one.**

☆ **This entry covers the reveal, the threshold, the Places of Power and the Citadel.** ⚠ **The Council of Dragons is 8.8**, and it is its own thing.

☆☆☆ THE REVEAL

Radek tells them to come to Mt Shasta. They have been there once, in the dark, on their bellies.

☆☆ **This time they are guests.** ⚠ **A tall, striking, auburn-haired woman with amber eyes is reading a book — a real one, paper, dead tree — and she puts it down, and heals them.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And then Hestaby tells them she has been their employer since the first job.**

What she says, in substance:

> ☆☆☆ *"The data-file you stole was* ***worthless, but a useful blind.*** ⚠ ***I wanted to see how you handled yourselves****, and I wanted others to believe you worked for someone else…*
>
> *There is a* ***contest*** *between the great dragons.* ***We act through chosen agents.*** ⚠⚠ *And we* ***cannot attack another dragon's agents directly*** *— that is a serious violation —* ***unless you attack first.****"*

☆☆ **In four sentences she has explained the entire season, and every one of those sentences detonates something behind the players.**

What she just said	What it retroactively explains
☆ **"Worthless, but a useful blind"**	⚠ **8.1. The file they risked their lives for was nonsense**, and if they cracked the Scramble-8 and found gibberish, **they now know why**
☆☆ **"I wanted to see how you handled yourselves"**	⚠⚠⚠ **8.1 was an audition,** ☆ **and the bodies they left in the Lodge were the grade**
☆☆☆ **"Others to believe you worked for someone else"**	**8.2.** ⚠⚠ **The planted files. The Lofwyr trail. The frame they were paid a Karma point for spotting**
⚠⚠⚠ **"We cannot attack another dragon's agents"**	☆☆☆ **8.5, and this is the one. Wales. Rhonabwy's offer, the five-minute head start, the rule that kept them alive —** ⚠ **and the reason they were in that treasury at all**
⚠ **"Unless you attack first"**	☆☆ **8.6. Aden on the road out of Tehran, who could not touch them while their hands stayed down**

HOW TO RUN THE REVEAL, AND THE ANSWER IS: SAY IT AND THEN STOP TALKING.

The temptation is to stage it — the slow walk, the shape changing, the dramatic pause. Do the opposite. She is a woman with a book who puts it down and explains something the runners should have been told a year ago, in plain sentences, without apology and without relish.

Then stop, and let the table talk.

Do not narrate the connections. Do not have her list the chapters. Let the players do it — and they will, out loud, at speed, interrupting each other. **"Abby." "The gravel." "*Wales*."** **The entire value of eight chapters of withheld information is discharged in about ninety seconds of players talking to each other, and a gamemaster who narrates over it has stolen the best moment of the campaign.**

When they get angry about Wales — and somebody will — she does not deny it and does not apologise. She needed to know whether they could survive being hunted. Now she knows. She will say so evenly, and she will not pretend it was for their benefit.

And when they ask what the Rite is actually for, she refuses: *"You are better off not knowing."* She will not describe the Jewel's nature and she will not name the prize. Hold that line absolutely. It is not coyness — it is the last withheld thing in the campaign, and 8.8 spends it.

THE OFFER

500,000 nuyen each, and her personal gratitude.

The job: go into the deep metaplanes, to a Citadel, and bring back a gemstone. She will not say what it is.

AND THE TARGET IS LOFWYR. She says that part. The most powerful being in the world, and they are being sent to take something out from under him, and they are being told so before they agree.

THE TWO-PRONGED OPTION, AND WHEN TO USE IT.

The module offers a **second team** hitting **Saeder-Krupp HQ in the German Alliance** for the *physical* Jewel — running straight into **Alamais's** agents doing the same thing.

Use it if your table has spare characters, retired PCs, or companions worth running. Otherwise leave it entirely off-screen and let the players hear about it afterwards, because **the whole point of the Alamais thread is that it was a decoy**, and a decoy is more powerful reported than played.

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

Hestaby sends them astrally. Their bodies stay at the Lodge.

Which means everything they own stays behind. The guns. The cyberdeck. The drones. The Shroud of Shadows, if they kept it. Eight seasons of equipment, on a table in a ski lodge in California, while they go somewhere it cannot follow.

And metaplanar time is distorted — hours here, weeks there, and no reliable exchange rate.

THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD IS THE FIRST OBSTACLE, AND IT IS NOT A FIGHT.

It asks each runner why they have come. Then it tells them something true about themselves — a deep fear, or a hidden misdeed they have kept from the rest of the team — and sets each of them a test.

In front of everybody.

> **THE DWELLER IS THE BEST ROLEPLAYING SCENE IN THE SEASON AND IT NEEDS PREPARATION YOU CANNOT IMPROVISE.**
>
> **Read the save before this session. Eight seasons of play have generated exactly the material this scene runs on:** what they did at the arcade in 7.8 · whether they took Karl Brackhaven's money in 3.1 · **the bodies in the Shasta Lodge** · what they chose in 6.5 · **who they gave the Scrolls to in 7.4 · whether they told the rest of the team about any of it.**
>
> **The Dweller does not need to invent a single secret. This campaign has been recording them for ten in-game years.**
>
> **One discipline, and it is not optional: clear it with the player privately, in advance, if the secret involves another PC. Inter-party tension is the intent; ambushing somebody's character in front of their friends is not. Ask, then run it hard.**

THE PLACES OF POWER

The quest is a succession of metaplanar Places, rolled on the module's own table — and the runners' identities can shift at each one.

They may arrive as fantasy analogues of themselves, as talking animals, as historical figures — or as *dracoforms*, experiencing what it is to be a dragon.

Place	What it is
Battle	Fight a drake or a dragon. **Deadly physical damage sends you back to your body, dying**
Charisma	**A social contest — argue for or against the Rite, before a council of dragons.** *A rehearsal for 8.8 that nobody will recognise as one*
Destiny	**Learn your role in the Rite. See below**
Fear	**Face your greatest fear.** A dragon demands a self-sacrifice
Knowledge	**Prove you understand the Rite — Hestaby herself sets the questions**
Magic	Free a woman trapped in a magical diagram. **She is a malevolent free spirit**

⚠ **Spirits**	Fight a western dragon spirit
☆☆☆ **The Citadel**	**The end**

⚠⚠ **The book's own note, and it matters more here than anywhere in the season: *avoid deadweight*.** ☆☆ **Reshape the decker and the rigger so their skills mean something off the Matrix.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A player whose entire character sheet is inert for the campaign's climax has been failed by the gamemaster, not by the module — ☆ and the identity-shift rule exists precisely to fix it. Use it deliberately, not randomly.**

☆☆☆ THE PLACE OF DESTINY, AND THE DEAD MAN IN THE LIMOUSINE

Dunkelzahn is there, in human form, in a limo.

⚠⚠⚠ **And he has second thoughts.** ☆☆ **About the sacrifice. About the will. He asks them whether it was worth it.**

☆☆☆ **THESE ARE THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO ASK, AND HE HAS NO IDEA WHY.**

⚠ **They were in Seattle on 9 August 2057.** ⚠⚠ **They have spent five years living inside the consequences of that document** — the Mars photographs, the aquasphere, the Elemental Scrolls up a river, **a jade carving that made a Hong Kong import house into a power,** ☆ **the Seal of Green Gloves that hid the one man who could stop the arcology.**

☆☆ **Reassure him, and the First Wyrm is grateful.**

⚠⚠ **Do not script their answer and do not make it a test.** ☆☆☆ **Ask the question, go round the table, and write down what each of them says.** ⚠ **Some of them will be angry with him. That is a legitimate answer and he will take it.**

THE CITADEL OF THE DRAGON LORD

☆☆ **At the heart of the Citadel floats a crimson gemstone the size of a troll's head.** ⚠ **The accumulated lore of the Ages of dragonkind — the magical essence of the Jewel of Memory.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND LOFWYR IS WAITING.**

Gold and brass, and entirely unhurried:

> ☆☆☆ ***"Welcome to the end of your quest… I am Lofwyr, and I have an offer that may interest you."***

⚠⚠ **He anticipated Hestaby.** ☆ **He got here first, and he did not bother to take the gem, because he did not need to.**

THE DEAL: carry the gem out, give it to him, and he will grant them almost anything within reason.

On the table	⚠ Stated limits
Delta-grade cyberware · magical knowledge · limitless wealth	☆☆ **Gene-therapy longevity. Reconstructed identities.** ⚠ *"Their own island"*
☆ **Not literally the UCAS presidency**	⚠⚠ **But the means to have a real shot at it**
⚠⚠⚠ **He is *"not a wish-granting genie"***	☆ **Everything he offers is a thing a megacorporation can actually deliver**

⚠ Refuse and he does not kill them — the Rite forbids it unless they attack. ⚠⚠⚠ He bribes. He pressures. And he makes their lives *"a living hell"* — ☆☆ the full resources of Saeder-Krupp aimed at ruining five people, indefinitely, for as long as it amuses him.

> **☆☆☆ PLAY LOFWYR AS THE ONLY PERSON IN THE SEASON WHO TELLS THEM THE TRUTH.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Hestaby lied to them for six chapters and told them so in a room with a book. ☆ Lofwyr, in the first thirty seconds, states his name, his position, his offer and his terms. ⚠⚠⚠ He does not pretend to be a friend, he does not pretend the offer is generous, and he does not pretend that refusing is safe.**
>
> **☆☆ And he is genuinely offering it. This is not a trick. ⚠ A team that takes the deal gets paid, in full, in exactly the currency named — ☆☆☆ and hands the lore of dragonkind to a feudal Darwinist who believes the strong are made to rule.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ That is the whole moral architecture of the finale, and it must be presented cleanly enough that taking the deal is genuinely tempting. ☆ If your players never seriously consider it, you have played him wrong.**
>
> **⚠ And if the team already owes him — see the payoffs below — ☆☆ he opens by mentioning it, pleasantly, as a man recalling a shared acquaintance.**

☆☆ THE ALAMAIS TWIST, WHICH THEY MAY NEVER LEARN

⚠⚠⚠ Alamais — Lofwyr's clutch-brother and blood-enemy — arranged to steal the physical Jewel of Memory out of Saeder-Krupp.

☆☆☆ And Lofwyr let him.

⚠ Because he already knew Hestaby's agents were taking its essence, ☆ which makes the stone Alamais is congratulating himself over an empty shell.

⚠⚠ The runners are inside that plan, on the other side of it, and nobody has told them any of this. ☆☆ Report it in 8.8 or never. It is the last confirmation of what kind of game they have been a token in.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆ 500,000 nuyen each**, contracted — **⚠ and not yet paid.**
- **☆☆☆ The truth about the last year of their lives.**
- **⚠⚠ Whatever the Dweller said about them, in front of each other. ☆ Permanent.**
- **☆☆ A conversation with a dead dragon**, and their own answer to his question.
- **⚠⚠⚠ A standing offer from Lofwyr**, which does not expire and which they have not yet answered.
- **☆☆☆ And a crimson gem the size of a troll's head, which is the accumulated memory of dragonkind, and which they are carrying.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off

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☆☆☆ **The gem, in their hands**	⚠⚠⚠ **8.8. Everything**
☆☆☆ **Lofwyr's offer, unanswered**	⚠⚠ **8.8.** ☆ **He asks again in front of everybody**
☆☆ **What they told Dunkelzahn**	⚠ **8.8**, if you want it — ☆ **the First Wyrm's gratitude is a real thing in a room full of dragons**
⚠⚠ **What the Dweller exposed**	☆ **Never adjudicated. Just true**
☆ **Hestaby's refusal to say what the prize is**	⚠⚠⚠ **8.8**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND THIS IS THE ONE PLACE IN THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT WHERE A BACK-REFERENCE IS PERMITTED. SPEND IT HERE.**

⚠⚠ **The standing rule of this project is that the Shadowrun outline plants and never calls back** — the Sixth World seeds are unexplained tells, **the Fourth World is the answer key**, and a crossover box may cite only what the players have already played. ☆ **Under the agreed play order, a Shadowrun Season 8 box may draw on Earthdawn Seasons 1 through 7.**

☆☆☆ **So, for the first and only time: if your table played the Barsaive side, they have already lived through a Rite of Succession.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Vasdenjas dies at Sky Point, and his death triggers a RITE OF SUCCESSION among the great dragons — contesting his lair, his possessions, and his role as LOREMASTER.**

☆☆ **The same institution. The same name. The same trigger — a great dragon's death. The same contested title.** ⚠ **Six thousand years apart.**

⚠⚠ **AND YOU STILL SAY NOTHING.** ☆☆☆ **The rule does not become "explain it" just because a reference is legal — it becomes "you may let the shapes touch."**

☆ **How to spend it, concretely and cheaply:**

- ⚠⚠ **Use the words the other game used. "Rite of Succession." "Loremaster."** ☆☆☆ **Do not paraphrase them into "the contest" and "the title." The vocabulary is the whole delivery mechanism.**
- ☆ **Let Hestaby be bored by the procedure.** ⚠ **She has done this before. A great dragon treating a once-in-an-age event as a familiar administrative form is the strongest possible tell and costs one line of tone.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not have anyone say "this has happened before."** ☆ **A player who played Barsaive will say it, and they will say it to the other players, and that is the moment.**

☆☆ **AND HOLD THE LAST ONE.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Both campaigns end in a room with the dragons in it. That rhyme belongs to 8.8, and it is the last card this project has.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **4.2 · *Double Take*, and this is why the document told you to write it in capital letters.** ⚠⚠ Four seasons ago the team most likely walked away with ***a debt to Lofwyr that was designed never to be paid off*** — the book's own instruction being that *"each debt repaid somehow incurs a new one."*

They are now standing in front of him, holding the thing he wants, being offered anything within reason. A team that owes him is having a completely different conversation from a team that does not, and he will bring it up first, pleasantly, the way one mentions a mutual friend.

8.1, 8.2, 8.5 and 8.6, all at once. See the reveal table above. Four chapters of withheld explanation are returned in four sentences.

Season Six, and the will, one final time. The man who wrote it is sitting in a limousine on a metaplane asking whether he was right, and the runners have spent five years handling the answer piece by piece without ever being asked for an opinion.

7.8. The last time they went somewhere their bodies could not follow, they were fighting an AI inside an ultraviolet host to save a hundred thousand people. This time it is quieter, and the stakes are larger, and nobody outside this room will ever know.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Give the reveal its own session, or at least its own hour. Do not open the metaplanes in the same breath. Let them sit in a lodge with a dragon and argue with her.**
- **Prepare the Dweller from the save, and clear cross-PC secrets with the player first. See the box above. This is the one scene in the season you genuinely cannot wing.**
- **Choose the Places of Power; do not roll them blind. The table is a menu. Guarantee Destiny** *(Dunkelzahn)*, **guarantee Charisma** *(because it rehearses 8.8)*, and pick the rest to suit who is at your table — **Fear for the character with something to prove, Magic for the mage, Battle only if someone wants it.**
- **Run at least one Place with the party as dracoforms. Eight seasons of being small things in a world run by enormous ones, and then an hour of being one. It costs nothing and it changes how they behave in 8.8.**
- **Deadly damage in the Place of Battle sends a runner back to their body, dying. Which means the rest of the team is still out there, and somebody at the Lodge is now bleeding on a floor under Hestaby's supervision. Use that. Do not kill them offstage.**
- **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** metaplanar quests exist in 2E's magic rules and the structure carries over intact; **the Dweller and the Places need no statistics at all — they need the save file.**
- **And end the session with the gem in someone's hands and Lofwyr's offer unanswered. Do not let them decide at the Citadel. Make them carry it to the Council.**

⭐⭐⭐ 8.8 · The Council of Dragons — SERIES FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Survival of the Fittest*** (FASA #7332, SR3) — ⭐ the Endgame and Epilogue of adventure 7.
⚠⚠ **A mountain plateau, on the astral, in 2063.**

⭐ **Karma:** surviving **1** · completing the astral quest **2** · ⭐⭐ **making a good Council decision 1** — ⚠⚠⚠ **plus a campaign bonus of 2 to 4.**

⭐⭐⭐ **That campaign bonus is the last Karma this campaign will ever award. Award it generously and say what it is for.**

THE ROOM

A mountain plateau. Roughly a dozen great dragons in a circle — westerns, easterns, feathered serpents. ⚠ **Everything the runners have spent a year working around, in one place, at once.**

⭐⭐ **And as it resolves, four remain upright: GHOSTWALKER. ALAMAIS. HESTABY. LOFWYR.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The runners are there as astral forms, and they are holding the accumulated memory of dragonkind in their hands.**

⭐⭐⭐ **NOBODY IN THAT CIRCLE CAN TAKE IT FROM THEM.** ⚠ **Not one of them. Not Lofwyr. The Rite's own rules — the rules Hestaby finally explained one chapter ago — mean the most powerful beings in the world have to stand in a circle and *ask*.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE CHOICE — AND IT IS A REAL ONE

The runners decide who wins.

They give it to	What the world becomes
⭐⭐⭐ **HESTABY** *(the intended ending)*	⚠ **She presents it — and then returns it to Lofwyr and declines the title. She wins the Rite as a moral victory and takes nothing**, spending the prestige on Dunkelzahn's cooperation dream. ⚠⚠ Keeps **Lofwyr's respect-tinged enmity and Ghostwalker's grudge**
⚠⚠ **LOFWYR**	⭐ **His authority is confirmed and strengthened. The runners earn Lofwyr's gratitude and his rewards** — ⚠⚠⚠ **and Hestaby's enmity**
⭐ **GHOSTWALKER**	⚠ **He claims Loremaster and moves to reclaim Dunkelzahn's willed items** — ⭐⭐ **which means everything this season delivered gets pulled back.** A solid rival to Lofwyr, and a traditionalist restoration
⭐ **A neutral — Rhonabwy, Celedyr, Hualpa**	⚠ **A compromise.** ⭐ Each of them has met these runners; **each verdict reads differently depending on how those chapters went**
⚠⚠ **Alamais, Masaru or Ryumyo**	⭐ **The others object.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The Rite may be voided and restarted** — *the world does not resolve*
⚠⚠⚠ **DESTROY IT**	⭐ **No Loremaster at all. The dragons are outraged and the runners make many enemies at once** — ⚠ **and Hestaby wins by default**

SPLIT IT	**Distributed among the dragons: a council instead of a Loremaster. The most genuinely novel outcome on the table, and the module allows it**
KEEP IT	**Impossible. One warning — and then the Rite's protection is forfeit and the Council's wrath is not survivable**

> **THE ONE THING YOU MUST NOT DO IN THIS SCENE IS STEER.**
>
> **You have run sixty-three episodes to reach a moment where five people at a table decide the shape of a world**, and every instinct built up over ten in-game years of gamemastering will now push you to protect the canonical ending.
>
> **Do not protect it.**
>
> **Hestaby has been a good employer and a manipulative one. She used them, she lied to them for six chapters, and in Wales she sold their position to a great dragon to see if they could run. A table that has noticed all of that and hands the gem to Lofwyr instead has not misunderstood the campaign. They have understood it exactly, and disagreed.**
>
> **Let each dragon in the circle make its case briefly and in character — Ghostwalker on tradition and theft, Lofwyr on strength and order, Hestaby on cooperation, Alamais on grievance. Then ask the players, go round the table, and let them argue with each other.**
>
> **And whatever they choose, run the consequences straight. The module was built to survive every one of them, and a finale the players actually chose beats a finale they were guided into by any measure that matters.**

THE CANONICAL ENDING, AND WHY IT IS THE BEST ONE ON OFFER

Give it to Hestaby, and she presents it to the Council — and then hands it to Lofwyr.

> ***"This contest is done, but I will not claim the title of Loremaster… Far Scholar showed us a beginning, a new path where we exist in COOPERATION with the Young Races."***

She wins, and refuses the prize, in front of everyone.

And note what she calls Dunkelzahn: *Far Scholar*. Not the President. Not the dragon on the trid. The name his own kind used, and the runners are the only mortals alive who will hear it said out loud.

What it costs her: Lofwyr keeps the Jewel and the title. Ghostwalker — who started this precisely to stop Lofwyr holding it — has now watched a rival hand it back to him voluntarily, and his grudge is permanent.

What it buys: the one thing a title could not. Every dragon in that circle watched her be offered absolute authority over her own kind and decline it on principle. By 2063 she holds enormous prestige and a seat on the Tír Council of Princes — Lofwyr's old seat — and Lofwyr has begun to delve deeper into the Jewel, seeking the ageless wisdom stored within.

Nerd Hub: https://nerdhubnexus.netlify.app
Shadowrun character generator: https://shadowrungen.netlify.app

THE EPILOGUE — TWO DRAGONS ON A MOUNTAIN

⭐ **Hestaby watches her agents go, resumes her true form, and is visited on Mt Shasta by Lofwyr in astral form.**

⚠️⚠️ **They address each other by names nothing metahuman uses.** ⭐ **He calls her *Orange Queen*. He calls himself *Gold-Master*.**

> ⚠️ ***"I underestimated you... it will not happen again... you would find me a formidable enemy."***
> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"I do not believe it is necessary for us to be enemies... I had something more like FRIENDSHIP in mind, or at least cooperation."***

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **And Lofwyr does not understand the word.** ⭐⭐ ***"What is friendship to us?"*** **— asked seriously, by the most intelligent being on the planet, who genuinely cannot locate the concept.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THAT IS THE LAST IMAGE OF THE SERIES AND IT IS NOT ABOUT THE RUNNERS AT ALL, WHICH IS EXACTLY RIGHT.**

⭐ **Then Lofwyr goes, and Hestaby opens a file from the Zurich-Orbital datastore — her own bequest, five years unread:**

> ⭐⭐ ***"My dear Hestaby... consider my advice for dealing with our fellow dragons..."***

⚠️⚠️ **The dead dragon gets the last word in his own campaign.**

🔪 ⚠️⚠️ **A NAMING QUIRK, FLAGGED NOT SILENTLY FIXED.** ⭐ ***Survival of the Fittest* uses "Orange Queen" as Hestaby's epithet** (with "Gold-Master" for Lofwyr and "Far Scholar" for Dunkelzahn). ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Other canon treats the Orange Queen as a *distinct* eastern dragon.** ⭐ **"Far Scholar" and "Gold-Master" are safe and worth using. Handle "Orange Queen" with care —** ⭐⭐ or simply have Lofwyr call her **Hestaby**, which costs the scene nothing.

⭐⭐⭐ THE BOOKENDS — AND THEY WERE PLANTED IN EPISODES ONE AND THREE

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **DAISY. In session three, a talismonger in far-east Renton paid them five thousand nuyen to recover ritual materials, thanked them, and made a phone call.** ⭐ **She was Hestaby's agent, and this document has said nothing about her for sixty entries.**

⭐⭐⭐ **A novice team did one unglamorous errand for a polite stranger in 2053, and found out whose errand it was while standing in a Council of Dragons in 2063.** ⚠️ **It cost one sentence, once, and it was never touched again.**

⭐⭐ **Say her name in the epilogue. Once. Nothing more.** ⚠️ Hestaby mentions, in passing, who first told her these people were worth watching — **and the table will remember a shop and a woman with six colours in her hair.**

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⚠⚠ **LOUIS NEEDLES**, if you took the free plant at **1.1.** ☆ **The urchin in the Stuffer Shack who pestered everyone about whether they were real shadowrunners and whether they had ever met a dragon.**

☆☆☆ **He is nineteen now.** ⚠⚠ **Bring him back in the last scene and let them answer him.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **500,000 nuyen each,** ⚠ **or whatever Lofwyr promised, delivered in full and exactly as specified.**
- ☆☆☆ **A world with their fingerprints on it.** ⚠ **Not a rescued one. A *decided* one.**
- ⚠⚠ **The permanent enmity of at least one great dragon, whichever way they went.**
- ☆☆ **The permanent gratitude of another.**
- ☆ **And the knowledge that a dozen of the oldest beings alive had to stand in a circle and ask them for something.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **1.3 · *Site of Desecration*.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The longest payoff in the campaign, ten in-game years and sixty-one episodes long.** ☆ **See the bookends above.**

☆☆ **1.1 · *Food Fight*, optionally, and it is the cheapest bookend ever written.** ⚠ **A kid asked them in the first hour of the campaign whether they had ever met a dragon.**

☆☆☆ **Every chapter of Season Eight, at once.** ⚠ **Ghostwalker remembers being told the truth in a warehouse (8.2). Hualpa remembers who carried his inheritance up a river (8.3). Lung and Ryumyo are still watching each other (8.4). Rhonabwy watched them win his hunt honestly (8.5). Aden remembers whether they gave the Shroud back (8.6).** ☆☆ **Five dragons in that circle have a personal opinion of this team, and the runners earned every one of them.**

☆☆ **The closing beat of Season Five.** ⚠ **They were in the city on 9 August 2057 when he was killed. Here they finish his argument for him.**

☆ **4.2.** ⚠⚠ **If they owed Lofwyr, he is in the circle, and the debt is in the room.**

> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE CROSSING HAPPENS HERE. THIS IS THE DOOR.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **RULED: the last pair does not alternate. It converges.**
>
> ☆☆ **The interwoven finale is an author-declared design goal — the Sixth World party is pulled into the past to fight Verjigorm alongside the Earthdawn party,** and the cross-system stat bridge already exists to carry them there. ⚠ **The only thing that was ever open was *where the crossing happens*. It happens on this plateau.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **AND THE REASON IS THAT BOTH SEASON EIGHTS ALREADY END IN THE SAME ROOM.** ⚠⚠ **The Rite of Succession's Council of Dragons in 2063, and the Fourth World's own council of dragons who commission a party to hunt the Hunter, at the far end of the other campaign.** ☆ **Six thousand years apart, both convened because dragons need mortals to settle something they will not settle themselves.**

> ⚠ **Strict alternation would have ended this whole project on the Fourth World — a prequel ending, six thousand years before the Sixth World.** ☆☆ **Convergence ends it in both rooms at once, which is the only ending that uses what the project actually built.**
>
> **HOW IT RUNS, AND THE ORDER MATTERS:**
>
> > • ☆☆☆ **① Play 8.8 complete and self-contained, exactly as written above.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The Rite resolves. The players decide. The epilogue plays. Do not truncate the Shadowrun ending to make room for the crossing —** ☆ a finale that turns out to be a hinge is not a finale, and **these players have earned an ending of their own.**
> >
> > • ☆☆ **② Then the crossing, as the last beat, opening outward rather than closing.** ⚠ **They are already astral, already standing on a mountain that does not exist, already outside ordinary time —** ☆☆☆ **and 8.7 spent a whole chapter establishing that in the deep metaplanes, time runs at a different rate and identity is negotiable. The door has been open since the Threshold. Nobody has to build one.**
> >
> > • ⚠⚠ **③ Land in the Fourth World's commission with both parties on the table.** ☆ **The stat bridge handles the mechanics —** ⚠ mundane runners port as non-adepts, **the decker is stranded and becomes the character most transformed by the crossing**, and firearms become exotic missile weapons with finite ammunition.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE SPOILER DISCIPLINE SURVIVES CONVERGENCE COMPLETELY — DO NOT RELAX IT.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **The crossing is an EVENT, not an explanation.** ⚠ **Nobody says "notice that both campaigns ended at a council of dragons." They stand in a circle of great dragons in 2063, and then they stand in a circle of great dragons in 1513, and no one comments on it, ever.** ☆☆ **The shape delivers itself, and it delivers harder than any line of dialogue could.**
>
> ☆ **So the vocabulary rule stands unchanged and matters more, not less:** ⚠⚠ **use *Rite of Succession*, *Loremaster* and *a council of dragons* exactly and repeatedly, and gloss none of them.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND ONE PIECE OF GAMEMASTER-ONLY ORIENTATION, NEVER TO BE SPOKEN AT EITHER TABLE.** ☆ **The dragons in that circle are the keepers of something, and the Rite is a succession crisis on its face and a *custody question* underneath.** ⚠⚠ **The players are never told, and no dragon confirms it.** ☆☆☆ **The clue is the strangeness of what these beings will and will not trade for — and this campaign has shown that four separate times: an artifact refused (8.6), an inheritance returned (8.3), a bequest hoarded (8.4), and a title declined (right here).**
>
> ☆☆ **The thing the dragons are guarding is the thing the joint finale is about.** ⚠ **Which is why this room is the door, and why it could never have been anywhere else.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Give the Council its own session and clear the table of business first.** ⚠ **Pay them, resolve loose threads, let them shop. Then run one scene, for as long as it takes.**

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- ⚠⚠ **Let the dragons speak, and keep it short.** ☆ **Four speeches of three sentences each is more powerful than any of them at length,** ⚠⚠⚠ **and it leaves the room for the only conversation that matters, which is the one between the players.**
- ☆☆☆ **Go round the table and ask each character, by name, what they want to do.** ⚠ **Including the quiet one.** ☆☆ **This is the last decision of the campaign and every character should be on the record.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let it be decided by a roll, a vote you adjudicate, or a compromise you propose.** ☆ **If they deadlock, let them deadlock, and let the dragons wait. They will wait.**
- ☆ **Run the epilogue even if the players did something unexpected.** ⚠⚠ **Hestaby and Lofwyr have that conversation on that mountain in almost every branch —** ☆☆ the words change, the scene does not — **and the campaign should end on two immortals failing to understand each other, not on a payout.**
- ⚠ **SR3 → SR2E conversion:** ☆ **there is nothing to convert. No stats, no tests, no opposed rolls.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The finale of this campaign is a conversation.**
- ☆☆☆ **And when it is over, say so.** ⚠ **Out of character, plainly. Sixty-three episodes, ten in-game years, from a Stuffer Shack in Redmond in August 2053 to a mountain plateau in 2063.** ☆☆ **Tell them what they changed. Then close the book.**

SEASON EIGHT — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Nothing goes anywhere. That is what makes this ledger different from the other seven.

For sixty-three episodes this column has said *"Season 5," "Season 8," "any season."* There is no next season. So read this as the state of the world the players are leaving behind — and as the standing brief for anyone who ever runs a character in it again.

One exception, and it is gamemaster-only: there is no next *Shadowrun* season. The crossing at the end of 8.8 is not a next season — it is the joint finale, and the Fourth World carries it from there. See the crossover box at 8.8. Nothing in the ledger below is affected by it, because the Sixth World is genuinely finished.

Thread	Where it stands at the end of the campaign
The Rite of Succession	**Decided — by the players, personally, in front of a dozen great dragons. However it went, it went that way because five people at a table said so**
The Jewel of Memory	**Wherever they put it.** Canonically back with **Lofwyr**, who is *"delving deeper into the Jewel, seeking the ageless wisdom stored within"*
Hestaby	**Canonically: the prestige without the title, and Lofwyr's old seat on the Tír Council of Princes. The First Lady of Dragonkind, and their former employer**
Ghostwalker	**Still holding Denver, still hunting the six fragments of Zebulon — and canonically carrying a grudge about how this ended**
Lofwyr	**Whatever he promised them, he delivered. And he now knows their names, their capabilities and their price**
Daisy Quallon	**Still running a talismonger's shop in far-east Renton. Still not saying who she works for**
Radek	**A fixer with a growing reputation who never knew who he worked for either**
Toshi Akimura, "Silk"	**A Dunkelzahn Watcher, still funded by the will, still in New Orleans**
Buttercup · Sappho · Hilde · Sen Lo · Musa Muqla · Mack Donelley	**Alive, scattered across four continents, and every one of them owes or is owed**
Mitsuhama Unit 13 · Aztechnology · Wuxing · Renraku	**Four corporations with permanent files on this team**
The Shroud of Shadows	**Kept or returned. Either way, an object that hides things from divination is in the world and somebody knows where**
What the wraith took	**Gone. Karma spent by something else does not come back**
What the Dweller said about each of them	**True, in front of each other, permanently. Never adjudicated. Just true**
What they told Dunkelzahn in the limousine	**The last word any of them will ever have with him**
Louis Needles	**Nineteen, and he got his answer**

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AND ONE THING THAT IS NOT A THREAD.

In August 2053 a group of people who had never met bought groceries in a Stuffer Shack in Redmond and it went wrong.

In 2063 the same people stood on a mountain that does not exist, holding the memory of a species older than metahumanity, while a circle of great dragons waited to hear what they had decided.

Nobody outside that circle will ever know they were there.

That is a Shadowrun campaign.